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THE

OFFICE AND WORK

OF THE

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

BY

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PREFACE.

Truth, born of God, does not change; but the forms in which it is apprehended, and its modes of influencing the mind, are continually undergoing development. The old gospel contains many new systems of theology, and it is capable of producing many new methods of preaching.

The human method of presenting divine truth so that it may be received to the welfare of the soul, must be adapted to the soul, and to the soul of an age. Preaching is a progressive art, and in this aspect it is worthy of profound study. Preaching has not lost its power (as some assert) over the human mind, any more than the gospel has lost its power, — for truth always demands an interpreter, and the soul always yearns for a teacher in divine things; but there are times, when, from inexplicable causes, preaching passes through new phases and modifications, and in that process of transition its power is obscured. The present is such a period. This is confessedly an unsettled age: theories of society, education, and science are evolved and tested with astonishing rapidity; and it would be indeed strange if preaching did not feel the influence of the breath that has come over the intellectual world.

Much that is merely extrinsic and conventional must disappear; but the free thought and philosophic culture of the day will, in the end, pass into, instead of diminishing, the power of preaching, and Christianity will work in and through them for its own higher ends.

The preacher cannot hope to lead and guide minds if he does in no manner comprehend the wants of an advancing age, like the present, which is one of real interest, though of fearless inquiry, in theological questions, and of the bold reconstruction of religious philosophies. The preacher can no longer successfully deal in dull learning and trite ideas, without fresh thought, original and conscientious exegesis, noble and true literary form, and, above all, practical earnestness and spiritual life. Not that the want of these has characterized the past age, but that the time has come when their absence is a marked deficiency.

Still, too much ought not to be made of the intellectual aspects of the subject, important as they are; for, of the two classes into which Pascal divided preachers, — into those who belong to the order of intellect, and those who belong to the order of love, — the greatest preachers, as Pascal thought (among whom he counted Augustine), have ever been of the latter class; for to love God is the only way to know him and to teach him. Truly, for one to be a great preacher, he must have a deep and pervading enthusiasm; he must have an inward harmony with the object which interested the heart of Christ, and in which every selfish feeling is absorbed and lost. The main impulse of the preacher must be from within, — from sanctified affections, from the real sympathy of his soul with God. Thought

and expression — the profoundest thought and the most fit expression — are of little moment, if there is not the true, glowing heart behind them. Men, indeed, for the service of the Christian ministry, may be dwarfed by becoming accomplished scholars and polished orators, if they are not also rendered large-hearted, courageous, spiritual, consecrated men.

While I believe that divine truth should be presented to men's minds in fresh, powerful, and beautiful forms, —no less so than should scientific and literary truth, — there are, nevertheless, certain principles of preaching which do not vary, and which are always true, for "the church must light its candle at the old lamp;" and an endeavor has been made in the following pages to set forth some of those true and essential principles.

This volume is chiefly designed as a *text-book* in Homiletics and Pastoral Theology, for those who are in a regular course of training for the ministry of the gospel. While I hope that pastors may find in it something of value to themselves, it is mainly intended to be used by theological students in the class-room, for the purpose of recitation; and that will account for the broken-up and analytical style of the book, that being necessitated by the treatment in condensed, rather than expanded, forms of discussion of so many and varied themes. That will also explain the formal arrangement of the book; for the effort has been, not so much to depart from the ordinary plan, as to produce a good text-book of judicious rules; not so much to express private thoughts and opinions, as to state general and well-grounded principles.

I have always regarded it as a happy circumstance, that I enjoyed the teachings of Professor Park, of Andover, in the department of Homiletics; and it gives me pleasure to acknowledge the debt of gratitude I owe him for first awakening in me a lively interest in that study.

I have had another aim in publishing this book; and that is, to free myself in some measure from the routine of lecturing, and to secure time for that direct, familiar, and informal method of instruction which is peculiarly needed in treating the subject of preaching with beginners; and, indeed, I have meditated upon some new methods of teaching homiletics, which promise at least (though the result may not prove it) to be of a more quickening and truly philosophical nature than those sometimes pursued; but, at the same time, I fully recognize the necessity of a systematic course of training in this important department. "And so in art and religion. First in point of time, submit to rules; but first in point of importance, — the grand aim, indeed, of all rules, — rise through them to the spirit and meaning of them. Write that upon the heart and be free; then you can use the maxim, not like a pedant, but like an artist, — not like a Pharisee, but like a Christian."

What is contained in the following pages was composed primarily for the use of a Congregational theological school; but while by education and choice a believer and worshipper in the simple way of our New England fathers, I am every day less and less of a sectarian. Though, happily, the true tendency of the times is to the real unity of all Christians and Christian churches, yet not because of this popular current (which is as apt to be false as true), but from

deeply cherished convictions on this subject, I grow ever more inclined to honor the name of *Christian* above that of every other earthly name; and to hold the one "holy catholic church" above any particular portion of it, however loved and deserving of love; and I hope, therefore, that nothing of a narrow spirit will be found in these pages, even in regard to the views of other denominations of Christians where I honestly differ from them. May the time be hastened when each shall impart to the other freely of whatever gift or portion of truth may be committed to its keeping, and when the Holy Spirit may "*gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth.*"

In the second part of the book, in that which treats of Pastoral Theology, I have not intended to dictate what a pastor should be, but only to offer friendly suggestion and advice to young men; thinking that, though this subject is to a great extent a matter of personal experience, much may be done to prepare candidates for the ministry for their pastoral work. That kind of preparation has been, perhaps, too much neglected heretofore in our seminaries, which have laid themselves open to the charge of rearing scholars (or attempting to do so) rather than pastors; but it is the *pastoral work* which is the true test of ministerial character. I have endeavored to set forth a high ideal of this character — that though no aureole surrounds the head of the true Christian pastor and preacher, as in old pictures, yet that sanctity and truth should crown his life with a heavenly light; and that to the work of saving souls from the power of sin, through the preaching of the

Cross, the rarest faculties of mind, heart, and spirit may be devoted. If the counsels herein contained shall in the slightest degree tend to produce those strong, hardy, cross-bearing, cheerful, hopeful, wise, loving, and single-minded pastors, who are willing to labor among the poor as well as among the rich and the educated, who are willing to go anywhere, and to do anything which is required for the highest good of men, — such pastors, in fine, as Christ would bless as the spiritual guides of his people into a nobler life in Him, that result would be the greatest reward I could ask.

New Haven, Conn., May, 1869.

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INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *Greatness of the Work.*

Young men who have been scientifically educated, and who are accustomed to look at questions in a scientific way, on coming to the study of the ministry are sometimes at a loss to know what is the nature of their duties, and how to classify themselves and their work. Their work cannot, in truth, be classified. It does not come under any of the sciences; for it does not primarily concern knowledge, to which science absolutely belongs, but has to do, first of all, with those things that belong to revelation, and form the object of faith. These are, in some sense, indefinable. The sphere of the preacher, to express it generally, is man in his relations to God; and the task of the preacher is, to know the vastness of his work, and not to be discouraged by it.

1. The greatness of the preacher's work is seen *in that he is an ambassador of God to man.*

If the New Testament contains a rule of faith and conduct for men, essential for their salvation, we should expect to find in the same record that contains the faith, the appointed means of its ministration.

We could not conceive of God's giving a revelation of such import to men without at the same time distinctly

ordaining the best method of making it known to them. He would not leave this to loose, uncertain methods. If no regular divine agency had been appointed to publish the message of reconciliation between God and man, we should be apt to think that God is not in earnest in this; or, that it is no true revelation. If there is a word of peace from the higher government to our souls, there must be also a permanent embassy of peace, established in the foreign government of an alienated world. God could have converted the world by the preaching of Christ; he could have regenerated it by a pure act of power; but why is it that twenty centuries have passed, and but a fraction of the earth is Christian? Is it not because God sees fit to commit this work to men — to involve human effort, trial, sympathy, responsibility, in this circle of human redemption?

We clearly recognize the fact that *all* Christians are involved in this circle of responsibility to win souls to Christ, and we claim for the ministry no exclusive right to teach or to work. We do not forget for a moment that there is no essential distinction between the people and the preacher in point of responsibility. The preacher is but one of the people, as a captain is but one of an army, whom the army has chosen out of its own body to perform a certain duty. All who love Christ are called to the work of making him known; and this universal duty of all Christians is now better understood; or, rather, the church is returning to this primitive idea of Christianity. God speed the progress of this idea, until all the energy and working talent of the church, of whatever kind, shall be developed. We are no sticklers for ministerial prerogative in doing good. The minister has no monopoly in preaching, or praying, or working. The church of God is the *people* of God, and not the ministry. Still, there *is* a ministry of the gospel, and it has a great work to do, which other men in their worldly occupations and business cannot do

so well. It is the entire consecration of some to the highest good of others and of all.

Augustine says that this ministry was not given to angels, because then "human nature would have been degraded. It would have been degraded had it seemed as if God would not communicate his word by man to man. The love which binds mankind in the bond of unity would have no means of fusing dispositions, so to speak, together, and placing them in communion with each other, if men were not to be taught by men."

Yet Augustine himself had so profound a conception of the greatness and responsibility of this work, that when the eyes of the Christian world were fastened on him, he would go to no assembly or council which could ordain him a minister; and at last, when almost by accident he was chosen to a small spiritual charge, he received it with expressions of great affliction, so that his opposers said he was troubled because so small a place had been given him.[1] In like manner, Chrysostom, at the age of twenty-six, could not possibly be persuaded to take up the public service of the ministry, because he felt his unfitness for it.[2]

God, in other things also, works by secondary agencies — himself the originating power of all things, yet the only invisible One. He loves to hide himself in his instrumentalities, and to manifest himself through them. He who made the light before he collected it into the sun, and hung *that* in the heavens to be the steady reservoir and distributer of the light, seems to prefer, for his own wise ends, this instrumental method of working; and we should therefore expect, in the revelation of a new Faith from the skies, the simultaneous ordaining of special agencies to make known this new message of truth and life.

We actually *do* find in the Scriptures of God's revealed

[1] Aug. Confessions, B. XI. See also Epist. XXI., ad Valerium.
[2] Neander's Chrysostom, Eng. ed., p. 22.

will, this work of making known his word committed to the human instrument. As Christ gave the bread to his disciples to be distributed to the famishing multitudes, so God distributes the bread of life to men through the hands of his believing children and ministers; they are not priests, but *ministers;* they are not mediators, but simply servants.

Acts 20: 28. "*Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God.*" 2 Cor. 5: 18. "*And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation.*" Col. 4: 17. "*And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.*" Tit. 1: 3. "*But hath in due time manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior.*" The Gospel is a word, even as Christ is *the* Word. He was the perfect expression of God. In his preaching, character, life, and death, he spoke the word of God; and he commissions his preachers to continue to speak this word. One of the most extraordinary passages in the Bible, fitted to fill every Christian preacher's mind with awe, is that contained in 2 Cor. 5: 20, "*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.*" True preachers (and of these we speak) are here made to stand *in loco Christi;* they not only testify of Christ, but they represent him; they continue his work in his spirit and power; they are clothed in his representative authority. As ministers of Christ, they exhibit the love both of God and of man. In the gospel which they announce, setting forth the way of union by faith, and bringing God into sinful humanity, they sustain and carry on the blessed "*ministry of reconciliation.*" And so long as they truly love God and man, God speaks purely and powerfully through them to men; they persuade men to love God, even as *they* love him;

they give God's invitations from hearts stirred by his love; they hold forth the means of a divine life; they stand, as does the cross they preach, half in the light of heaven, and half of earth; they are, not physically, nor officially, but morally, instruments of converting men to God; they do not produce conversion, but they are the means to its production; they use the truth to produce it, taking the Bible out of the dead letter, and making it a living word to men.

While they thus speak his word, and manifest his spirit and his love, they are the living ambassadors of God as truly as were Elijah and Elisha, Paul and John; and no man may despise them, for they speak with a divine authority — they speak the word of God to man. "*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.*" God said to an ancient preacher, "*Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with thee, to deliver thee, saith the Lord. Thou, therefore, gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces.*" This sense of his divine commission is indeed the preacher's strength. He centres himself in God. He speaks out of the consciousness of God's choice of him, and of God's will expressed through him; and here is the source of his eloquence. The moment he loses this divine presence, and is conscious that he is delivering his own message, that he is speaking a human word, he becomes an ordinary man, an "earthen vessel" indeed.

This whole subject of the divine appointment of the ministry will be treated more thoroughly when we come to speak of the Pastoral Office; but it is a good opportunity here, though not rightly belonging to the introduction, to say a single word on this mooted point of the preacher's *authority*, as one who speaks the word of God. As a practical matter, young preachers find this trouble — that they have the feeling often that many in their audience do not receive the Bible with the reverent faith that they do themselves; and they think, therefore, that they cannot,

like the lawyer at the bar, point them to the word of God as final authority, saying, "This is the law on the subject, this is the statute, this settles the question." In answer to this we would say that the preacher has a right, or, to put it stronger, is compelled, to take for granted two things. First, that the Bible *is* the word of God, and therefore is final in its authority. This he must do to have a right to preach at all; here is his own commission. Christianity is, above all, a word, the word of God. He should preach as if he believed this; and here he finds his authority for what he says, and here is his standing-point to heave the minds of men from their deep-rooted sinfulness and sensuality. And he has to assume, secondly, that the audience before him do also believe that the Bible is the word of God, and that they may be spoken and appealed to as those who believe this. If the audience is composed of professed believers, as at the communion table, the difficulty vanishes. If the audience is a common mixed one, composed of believers and unbelievers, still the unbelieving portion put themselves in the position of believers by coming to the house of God to hear the gospel preached. They know that it is the house of God, where the Bible is preached as the word of God. There are, in any case, few in our congregations on the Sabbath who do not yield an outward respect to the Bible as the revealed word of God. Even a sceptical writer like Strauss concedes the historical value of a great portion of the Bible, and the value also of the religion which Christ, who he believed actually did live, taught. At all events there will not, probably, be one in the audience who does not believe in a God; and if one does believe in a God, he must also believe that God has created him and cares for him, and that he has somewhere or somehow expressed this care and love for him. The preacher then has a right to assume that the Bible *is* that good word and message of God to man; for if it is not, where can such a word be found?

The apostles, when they preached to pure heathens and infidels, planted themselves on the simple word of God, and they appealed to the primary laws of God written in the conscience to confirm what they spoke. It was "*by manifestation of the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God*," that they preached. The authority of the word of God was final with the apostles, while at the same time they cast themselves upon men's reason and consciousness to confirm the word preached. The apostles' preaching was thus both authoritative and persuasive. "*Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.*" "*Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul:*" here, while a command is uttered, a reason is also given; and a preacher may develop this reason to any extent, and show how inordinate appetites injure the spiritual nature. Times, it is true, have changed, and the authority of the preacher has apparently diminished; other influences have now come in to compete with the pulpit; and the preacher's faith and patience are tried more than formerly to sustain his heaven-delegated authority; but he should plant himself the more firmly on the word of God. He should awaken a deeper faith in his people in that word which "endureth forever," though the human preacher soon vanishes away. In the struggle between the authority of divine revelation and that of human consciousness, while Christianity admits both, and brings both to utter the same thing, it founds its final authority on the will of God; and here the preacher should stand, where Luther stood, and where the apostles stood.

2. The greatness of the preacher's work is seen from *the nature of the truths with which he deals.* These truths may be generally summed up under the one name of *divinity.* "And what is divinity," says Robert South, "but a doctrine treating of the nature, attributes, and works of the great God, as he stands related to rational creatures, and the way how rational creatures may serve, worship,

and enjoy him? And if so, is not the subject of it the greatest, and the design and business of it the noblest, in the world, as being no less than to direct an immortal soul to its endless and eternal felicity? It has been disputed to which of the intellectual habits mentioned by Aristotle it most properly belongs; some referring it to wisdom, some to science, some to prudence, and some compounding it of several of them together; but those seem to speak most to the purpose who will not have it formally, any one of them, but virtually, and in an eminent, transcendent manner, all. And now, can we think that a doctrine of that depth, that height, and that vast compass, grasping within it all the perfections and dimensions of human science, does not worthily claim all the preparations whereby the wit and industry of man can fit him for it? All other sciences are but handmaids to divinity; and shall the handmaid be richer adorned and better clothed and set off than her mistress? In other things the art usually excels the matter, and the ornament we bestow is better than the subject we bestow it upon; but here we are sure that we have such a subject before us as not only calls for, but commands, and not only commands, but deserves our application to it; a subject of that native, that inherent worth, that it is not capable of any addition to it from us, but shines both through and above all the artificial lustre we can put upon it. The study of divinity is indeed difficult, and we are to labor hard and dig deep for it. But then we dig in a golden mine, which equally invites and rewards our labor."[1] South says again, "For I reckon upon this as a great truth, that there can be no endowment in the soul of a man which God himself is the cause and giver of, but may, even in its highest and choicest operations, be sanctified and employed in the work of the ministry."[2] But let us consider this more particu-

[1] South's Sermons, Phil. ed., vol. ii., p. 79.
[2] Id., p. 70.

larly. The high and difficult nature of the truths with which the preacher deals appears in the fact that they are (*a.*) *metaphysical* truths. The preacher's work is necessarily intellectual; he deals with men's minds and rational nature; he must adapt the divine word to the human mind; he must know how to interpret it according to men's intellectual nature. True preaching is addressed first to the intellect, for men must know the truth before they can be expected to obey or love it. The intellect, conscience, affections, and will are so blended, that they form one spiritual nature, and we cannot tell where are the lines of separation. The importance to the preacher of understanding the human mind is thus spoken of by Sir William Hamilton: "Theology is not independent of philosophy. For as God only exists for us as we have faculties capable of apprehending his existence, and of fulfilling his behests, nay, as the phenomena from which we are warranted to infer his being are wholly mental, the examination of these faculties and of these phenomena is consequently the primary condition of every sound theology."[1] This must be so. How can the preacher approach the mind God has made with the truth of which God is the author, if he has no clear conception of those mental laws which affect the reception of truth, which turn it to sweetness or bitterness, to life or death? How can he reach the conscience, the real man of the heart, if he does not comprehend the relations of conscience to the faculties of knowledge? How can he influence the judgment or sway the reason, if he is totally untaught, by either education or observation, in the great principles of causality? Or how can he move the affections, if he knows nothing of their proper place in the mind, and what and where are the true springs to touch? Besides, we cannot know God's mind if we do not understand our own. We reason from our own nature to God's

[1] Metaphysics, p. 44.

nature. All reasoning upon strictly Natural Theology depends upon the clear apprehension of metaphysical axioms, and upon a sound philosophy. Everything, in fact, in the world of mind is subservient to the preacher's work. He works through ideas, reasons, motives, penetrating the depths of the mind. The first preachers, if they were illiterate men at the beginning, became learned in the Scriptures, in the human heart, in the gift of tongues, and in the incomparable instructions and impartations of Christ and his spirit. Robert South has a characteristic passage which may apply here, in which he vents his scorn against unlearned persons who crept into the ministry during the commonwealth, some of them, without doubt, better men than himself. "Many rushed into the ministry as being the only calling they could profess without serving an apprenticeship. Had, indeed, the old Levitical hierarchy still continued, in which it was part of the ministerial office to flay the sacrifices, to cleanse the vessels, to scour the flesh-forks, to sweep the temple, and to carry the filth and rubbish to the brook Kidron, no persons living had been better fitted for the ministry, and to serve in this nature at the altar. But since *it is made a labor of the mind*, as to inform men's judgments and move their affections, to resolve difficult places of Scripture, to decide and clear off controversies, I cannot see how to be a butcher, scavenger, or any such trade, does at all qualify and prepare men for this work. We have had almost all sermons full of gibes and scoffs at human learning. Hereupon the ignorant have taken heart to venture upon this great calling, and instead of cutting their way to it according to the usual course, through the knowledge of the tongues, the study of philosophy, school divinity, the fathers and councils, they have taken another and shorter cut, and having read perhaps a treatise or two upon the Heart, the Bruised Reed, the Crumbs of Comfort, Wollebius in English, and some other little authors, the usual furniture of old women's closets, they have set forth

as accomplished divines, and forthwith they present themselves to the service; and there have not been wanting Jeroboams as willing to consecrate and receive them as they to offer themselves." South was not a believer in *lay-preaching*. Indeed, in view of the greatness of the work, much is to be said on both sides of that question, and there may be extreme views taken on either side which are injurious to the cause of truth and religion. While all Christians should "preach the gospel," and many an unordained preacher, like the great lay-preacher who suffered for his boldness twelve years in Bedford jail, may be a hundred fold more effective than one who is regularly appointed, yet even the lay-preacher should be fitted for the work both by human and divine preparation; he should not be a "novice;" he should be "apt to teach." The fitness for this work, in fact, lies more in quality than in quantity. But there are also (*b.*) *moral* truths with which the preacher has to deal. As our moral nature is higher than our intellectual, so the preacher's work, which has to do chiefly with moral truth, is superior to all merely intellectual professions. The preacher is called upon to study those laws of God's government which underlie the whole system of truth; and his field is that vast moral system which God has opened to the human mind—that law which is "exceeding broad;" which is eternal because it is the manifestation of God's nature; which is perfect because it is the expression of his will; which is the law of the intelligent universe, one and simple in essence, but infinitely manifold in its applications.

To harmonize moral truth into a living whole is the preacher's work; for every man who deserves to be called "a preacher of righteousness" should, like Bunyan and Luther, have his *own* system of theology; that which he has himself drawn from the word, and which he preaches and lives. It is a want of reverence for moral truth not to strive, by one's own thought, in communion with the divine mind,

to discover the laws of order, arrangement, and beauty stamped upon it; and one cannot preach with the highest clearness and power who does not possess some well-ordered system of moral truth for his groundwork of reasoning and appeal. Moral truth has also an intimate and special relation to *man's* nature and duty. It enters the complex sphere of human life, and whatever bears directly or indirectly upon the common life of humanity belongs to the preacher's domain. He deals with the wonderful world of the human heart, its mixed good and evil, its affections that are so tender, its hate, passion, and crime, its joy and despair, its hopes and fears, its desires that are never satisfied but in God. Nothing is shut out from the preacher in mind, nature, morals, letters, art, science, government, the varied relations of society and human life, which influences moral character, and enters into the schooling of this lower life for a perfect life in God — in a word, that *human theology* concerning which Neander loved to quote the words, "*Pectus est quod facit theologum.*" But there is a still higher sphere of truth to which the preacher must ascend. He deals (*c.*) with *spiritual* truths. He must rise from the seen to the unseen, from the natural to the spiritual. In 1 Cor. 4 : 1 it is written, "*Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.*" In Eph. 6 : 19 it is also written, "*That I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel.*" In these passages, το μυστήριον means literally a secret, a thing not obvious, not explained, or not explained to all, and perhaps impossible to be known by human reason; for there is a true as well as a false mysticism. Vinet says, "Le bon mysticisme est la manne cachée des vérités évangéliques; il fait sentir ce que ne peut pas se dire, ce que l'analyse est impuissante à expliquer." [1]

In divine truth there is that which is obvious and that

[1] Histoire de la Prédication des Réformés, etc., p. 624.

which is more spiritual and hidden, but of which much may be known by the spiritual mind. A telescope applied to the heavens brings to view objects which for thousands of years were not known to the simple, unaided human mind; and Christian faith is, as it were, the application of a telescope to the spiritual firmament; it reveals things "*hidden from the foundation of the world.*" Christian faith is not a mere continuation or extension of natural religion, nor is it a system of religious truth which may be reached by, or is on a level with, our natural reason. It is above the level of natural religion. It is revealed by the Spirit. We could, of ourselves, never have arrived at the truth of the Atonement, although there is a profound preparation for it in man's history, and in the intimations and wants of his nature. Now, into this higher sphere of revealed truth, of those spiritual verities which comprehend the love and perfections of God and the truths of eternal life, — the whole unseen world of faith, — the preacher of Christ has to rise by the steps of faith, meditation, and prayer, so that he may become the interpreter of the hidden things of God; for it is no easy or common thing to "rightly divide the word of truth;" it shows that one has himself entered into it and apprehended it. It presupposes something more than scholarship, viz., *spiritual insight*, or the habit of communion with God and holy things. To be the guide of others in these regions of the higher truth, one must have had some true inward experience of the renewing power of truth; as Tholuck says, "Truth must have been revealed to him through the divine light of the cross shining upon his heart." The preaching of such men as Chrysostom, Fénelon, Herbert, Leighton, Baxter, Flavel, Bunyan, Whitefield, Gossner, Chalmers, Payson, entering into hearts by "*the power of the spirit of Christ*," came from a true knowledge of the saving and purifying power of the grace of Christ in the heart.

3. The greatness of the preacher's work appears *from its results*. These would be seen negatively were the pulpit stricken out of existence; or by the comparison of Christian lands with heathen lands, or even with countries where the pulpit is chiefly an engine of hierarchical and political power. A superior combination of morality, education, and civilization is never found in lands where the Christian pulpit is not found; and wherever, even, the pulpit has been shorn of its power, there is to be seen a corresponding moral deterioration among the people. Chalmers complained of the "dormancy of the Scottish popular mind," and we know the degraded character of the Scotch pulpit when he first entered public life; and this same dulness and moral stupor were seen across the Tweed in the popular mind, when the English pulpit had in a great measure lost the power it possessed in the days of Howe, Owen, Baxter, Leighton. The quickening influence of the pulpit upon the American mind is too obvious to be denied. Daniel Webster said that he first learned how to reason from the preaching which he heard in his native village. Dr. Wood, the minister of Boscawen, fitted him for college; and his tribute to the American ministry, in his argument on the Girard College case, is a proof of his intense convictions on this subject. The preacher goes deeper than the book in moulding the intellectual habits and tastes of his people; for he begins earlier than the author, and exercises a more vital sway upon mind. Almost the only true eloquence that now reaches the popular mind in Germany is the eloquence of the pulpit; and where are the men in any other profession who may be compared with those spiritual sovereigns in our own land, who, from their thrones, send forth a life-giving, shaping influence far around them? Some of the views of the living theologian of Connecticut may be considered to be open to attack; but his stimulating power upon American thought will not pass away. All the colleges in the land, with one or two exceptions,

owe their life principally to ministers; and how many a young man, educated at college, and afterward distinguished for great intellectual attainments and wide influence among men, was sent from some obscure village through the agency of his minister, who had awaked in him the thirst for knowledge! Many of our cities and towns were founded by ministers in the wilderness: New Haven by John Davenport; Hartford by Thomas Hooker and Samuel Stone; Providence by Roger Williams; Salem by Francis Higginson; Cambridge and Dorchester by John Warham; this country was settled through the influence of John Robinson, Richard Clifton, and other humble English Congregational ministers; and we need not repeat the well-proved fact, that our democratic institutions and republican form of government were modelled upon the practical working systems of that primitive Puritan New England church polity which was the fruit of the thought and wisdom of these minds. The intellectual, social, and moral influence of the preacher is too broad a theme to be entered upon in these introductory remarks; and as Oberlin, in the barren Ban de la Roche, among the Vosges Mountains, elevated his parish in a physical and moral scale of being, and taught them how to make roads and raise crops, as well as to seek the kingdom of heaven, so every true minister raises the scale of being about him. He forms a central power in the moral world. Sitting in his study, or standing in his pulpit, he wields a formative influence upon public opinion. He is the guardian of public virtue. He is the elect champion of the law of righteousness, as well as of the law of love. Wrong cannot withstand a free and faithful Christian pulpit. Every kind of vice — intemperance, licentiousness, slander, covetousness, dishonesty, law-breaking — feels its restraining hand. The importance of the Christian pulpit is comprehensively shown in the fact that it so effectually resists the power of the kingdom of evil in the world; that it sets itself in opposition to this great current;

that it does so hold the passions of men in check, that it speaks to men as with the voice of God, and bids them do what is right, and not do what is wrong. It not only resists but attacks evil. A true preacher is aggressive. He has taken up a warfare for truth. He assails the power of evil wherever it shows itself, and seeks it out in its deepest hiding-places. In the reproof of sin he is terrible as Elijah and stern as Amos; though he trusts more to the gentleness of Christ, and to "*the still small voice*" that finds its way to the heart.

Yet these results which have been glanced at are but the incidental and almost accidental side-issues and overflowings of the preacher's work; the direct results of his labors, under God, are inner and permanent, being wrought upon the soul. His work tells on character; and, viewed in this relation, it is not to be estimated by gross standards; we cannot weigh spiritual results; faith, hope, joy, holiness, everlasting life, are incommensurable in quantity. To be a spiritual counsellor and consoler, one to whom men turn instinctively in their sorrow for strength, for Christian consolation — what office so blessed! To speak the word of sympathy to the soul, to be its guide through the darkness and doubt of life, and to conduct it to the gates of everlasting life — what work is so great? He who can say of a single being, "*whom I have begotten in the gospel*," has "*saved a soul from death*," and has hid an innumerable and ever-increasing "*multitude of sins*." *One* soul, that of a child, brought to the knowledge of the Saviour, and shielded from the evil of the world, is a result which would infinitely more than outweigh the toils and sufferings of a whole ministerial life. It is difficult to make a statement like this look natural and true, although so easy to make it; but if the apostle believed what he declared, that it is through the foolishness of preaching that men are saved, then such a statement is true. What words, truly, were those spoken by Christ to Paul at his conversion! "*Rise*

and stand upon thy feet; for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and the Gentiles, to whom I now send thee, to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me."

Does not Christ say these words to every true preacher now? And if not only the enlightening of one soul, but of *hundreds* of souls, may follow his labors, how can he sufficiently magnify the greatness of his work? While Luther was still a monk, he was urged to accept the office of "Preacher and Doctor of the Holy Scriptures;" he drew back with terror. "Seek one more worthy of it," he said; but when the vicar-general pressed it, Luther, trembling, declared that "the Holy Spirit could alone make a Doctor of the Holy Scriptures;" and when at last constrained to accept the charge, he took this simple oath: "I swear to defend manfully the truth of the gospel;" as if this were all he could do, or dared to undertake, and that God must do the rest. The earnest, homely words of Philip Henry, on the day of his ordination, cannot be too often quoted to those entering the ministry: "I did this day receive so much honor and work as ever I shall know what to do with. Lord Jesus, proportion supplies accordingly."

4. The greatness and dignity of the preacher's work are seen from the fact that *Jesus was a preacher*. It seems strange that we do not, as a general thing, seem to think of the Saviour as a *preacher*, nor set his preaching before us as a model for our own; for while there may be, it cannot be doubted, a profound truth in this negative sentiment of all reverent minds, arising from the fact that our Lord is above all human comparison, and also in the blended fact

that our Lord furnished the material and was "the truth" that we, as preachers, are to use and proclaim, as in another's words: "Thus he spoke to them of the kingdom of heaven; and when he wielded the powers of his kingdom, they felt more and more that he governed the secret heart of nature and of man;"[1] yet, notwithstanding all this, if we take the Saviour's own testimony upon this point, he claimed to be a preacher, and made this a main part of his earthly work. We have but to recall the scene in the synagogue at Nazareth, where he applied to himself Isaiah's words, "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me, to preach the gospel to the poor, he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.*" And it is said in Matt. 11: 1, "*And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities.*" And in Mark 1: 38, 39, "*And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth; and he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee.*" The power of Jesus' preaching may be estimated by its effects. Great multitudes followed him. He drew them after him in a triumphal train wherever he went. The Pharisees said, "*If we let him alone, all the people will believe on him;*" and it was from his deadly enemies that the remarkable confession came, "*O, sirs, never man spake as this man.*" The fears, hope, love, hate, of the multitudes who thronged him were touched. If eloquence consists in moving the soul, this was eloquence. He made men look into their hearts, and they rushed upon him to destroy him, or cast themselves at his feet to adore him. He swayed men at his will. He made men look to him for help. They brought their *real* wants,

[1] F. D. Maurice. Theol. Essays.

doubts, and sorrows to him. They asked him questions with that popular instinct which, in some sense, is the voice of God, because it is the voice of nature, perceiving in him a divine truth, seeing that he was a true teacher. And how many cases are mentioned in the Gospels of immediate conversion's following his words! The more remote results of Christ's preaching is a theme beyond the power of imagination to conceive; for the few recorded discourses and words of Christ have formed the staple of divine truth and of all true preaching, ever since. The great characteristic of Christ's preaching might reverently be thus expressed: that *essential truth*, truth which is necessary for the soul's life, was conveyed by him in such a way — with such clearness, naturalness, and illustrative force — that this truth came to be apprehended, not only by the minds, but in the hearts, of his hearers. They saw the truth and loved it, or they saw the truth and hated it. There was in his teaching a perfect adaptation to those whom he addressed. He found the heart of every one to whom he spoke. He had the efficiency of sympathetic love. He reached every one because he perfectly loved every one. When he preached to his disciples, it was one thing; when to the Pharisees, it was another. But there was always a fundamental truth, a fact concerning God and man's relations to him, a principle of divine life which was already acknowledged by the natural conscience, or revealed in the Scriptures; and this fact, principle, or truth, be it terrible or joyful, was set forth before the people's eyes and hearts, as clearly as the sun. Neither they, nor any men after them, will ever forget or really disbelieve the truth of the forgiving mercy of the heavenly Father, as set forth in the parable of the "Prodigal Son." Therefore the teachings of Christ, in a higher sense than the words were originally used, are a κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί. They will never drop out of the world's heart. May we not, then, as preachers, profit from Christ's preaching? Should we not earnestly study him as a preacher?

It may be that the Occidental mind demands a treatment of truth different from what the Oriental requires, and that the ages differ; but truth is the same, and man's mind is the same now as then; and the intrinsic qualities of our Lord's preaching may be studied, even if his preaching was that of Omniscience. The dignity and greatness of the preacher's work is, at all events, crowned by the fact that Jesus was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor.

PREACHING.

PART FIRST.

PREACHING SPECIALLY CONSIDERED.

FIRST DIVISION.

THE HISTORY AND ART OF PREACHING.

§ 2. *Definition of Preaching.*

"PREACHING," or "κήρυγμα," is a generic scriptural word, which signifies literally a *heralding* of the word of God to man, to one man as well as to all people. It is not necessarily a popular address, or discourse, but may be applied to all kinds of "proclaiming," or "publishing," of Christian truth, in conversation, in the interviews of missionaries with the heathen, in the common intercourse of men, in the daily life and example — in fact, it is making known, in any and every way, the gospel to men.

The Greek word "homily," which sprang up in post-apostolic times, and which is precisely identical with our modern word "sermon," has really a scriptural origin, from ὁμιλία and ὁμιλέω, as used in 1 Cor. 15 : 33, Acts 20 : 11, to mean familiar interlocutory address. It came, however, to be applied to the *set preaching* that in later times formed part of the worship of the sanctuary.

"Homiletics," as a science, has been thus variously defined: "The science which teaches the principles of adapting the discourses of the pulpit to the spiritual benefit of the

hearers. It is a part of practical Theology."[1] "The science of Rhetoric applied to the theory of Preaching, to the construction and delivery of a sermon."[2] A definition from a popular source is still simpler: "The Art of Preaching."[3]

Vinet calls Homiletics "a department of Rhetoric;" but it would be more dignified to call it the application of the principles of Rhetoric to preaching the word of God, which is the end and aim of all eloquence.

The term "homily" has, as we have said, a genuine scriptural source, and was a term which was very early applied to preaching; but in the period succeeding the apostolical times, it came to signify a more formal address to a regular religious assembly. Thus Hagenbach quotes this passage from one of the fathers: "*Theologi Christiani, et nominatim ex veteribus Chrysostomus, Basilius, Macarius, et alii,* ὁμιλίας *vocant sermones ad cœtum habitos. Atque ita* ὁμιλία *et* λόγος *differunt.*"[4] The "homily," or, which is the same thing, the "sermon," combines the simple idea of "preaching," or "publishing the word of God," with the idea of more thoughtful and systematic instruction of God's people in the truth. It has essentially the character of a "discourse," combining, in however rude a form, analysis and synthesis.

Vinet's definition of the "sermon" is, "a discourse incorporated with public worship, and designed, concurrently or alternately, to conduct to Christian truth one who has not yet believed in it, and to explain and apply it to those who admit it."[5]

[1] Dr. Fitch. [2] Prof. Phelps. [3] British Critic.
[4] Hagenbach's Grund. der Lit., etc., Der Predigt, § 31.
[5] Vinet's Homiletics, p. 28.

§ 3. *History of Preaching.*

This is a theme upon which much time might be spent, and there is no richer field of research, since, in some sense, it comprehends the history of theology and of spiritual religion; for in no part of the history of the church is the progress and advancement of spiritual truth, and of the kingdom of God in the world, more clearly exhibited than in the history of preaching. It is, indeed, still but partially developed; but we cannot linger long upon it in a work that has a more immediately practical aim.

1. Nothing marks the intellectual and religious spirit of a period more distinctively nor more delicately, than its style of preaching. As Coleridge says, "The tone, the matter, the anticipated sympathies in the sermons of an age, form the best criterion of the character of that age;" and this may serve as a guiding principle in the investigation of the history of preaching, for while the great fundamental truths of Christian preaching remain the same in all times and in every age, the style of preaching, in its spirit and form, has been a genuine though ever-changing index of the phases of religious and theological opinion of different Christian epochs and civilizations. And have we not good reason to think that preaching itself has been shaped and guided by the Spirit of God?

There are ever thus, in the history of preaching, the permanent and the variable elements, since preaching does not remain the same, while its theme is ever the same; and he surely is the preacher who is best fitted to influence the age in which *he* lives, who, while he remains true to the unchangeable principles of divine truth, is still impressible and intelligently alive to the influences of the present time, of which he forms a part.

So far as the mere form of preaching is concerned, he

who would preach now precisely in the style of the scholastic ages, or even of the age of our earliest New England fathers, would be regarded as a crazed enthusiast; and we might perhaps extend that remark to the age of the reformers, and of the apostles themselves; for Christ may be preached under other forms, and with a different style of argumentation, and a new clothing of words and diction, and it would still be "*Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.*"

2. There has been, from the beginning of time, *a Word of God in the world*, which is to be taught to men principally through the intelligent and independent, though divinely-directed, instrumentality of human agencies, — we may freely term them "*preachers*," — for they publish divine truth as with the clear sound of a trumpet. Noah, early in the beginning, but after the world had fallen away from the knowledge of God, is thus called "*a preacher of righteousness.*" Moses, who could lead an exodus, felt himself unequal to the task of teaching the people by public address, and transferred that work to Aaron. "Schools of the prophets" were established very early in the history of the Jewish nation. In Jehoshaphat's time we read (2 Chron. 17 : 9) of those "*who taught in Judah, and had the book of the law with them, and went throughout the cities of Judah and taught the people.*"

The "*prophets*" of the Old Testament are, above all, noticeable in this regard; as resembling, far more than the "priests" of that time and dispensation, the preachers of the Christian church; for they were true *teachers* of the people; and the most ancient meaning of the word "prophet" in the original Hebrew, and in its earliest use in the Bible, was not so much "foreteller," as "spokesman," or "interpreter," of God's will.[1]

In the "prophet," the moral and spiritual elements of

[1] Stanley's Hist. of Jewish Church, Scribner's ed., vol. i., p. 459.

religion altogether prevailed over the formal and ceremonial.

After the Captivity, there was great and renewed enthusiasm for the pure teaching of the books of the Law, and schools were established to raise up accomplished teachers of the moral law, who were the "lawyers" and "scribes" of the New Testament. Synagogues, also, were founded, in which were regular expositions of "the Law and the Prophets" on the Sabbath; and in the time of the apostles, according to Philo, the services in the large and splendidly adorned Jewish synagogues, consisted chiefly in oral instruction and free, extended speaking.

Still, it must be said that "preaching," in the New Testament and Christian sense of the term, was not the chief or prominent instrumentality of spreading divine truth and building up the kingdom of God in the Old Testament time and dispensation; but we do not, nevertheless, consider preaching to be so peculiar to the Christian economy, that there are no suggestions of it, or examples of it, in the older church; for it belongs, rather, to the very needs of our human nature, to the divine method of reason and love, to the character of a reasonable and spiritual religion, and to the most efficient mode of communicating truth.

3. When the time had come for the kingdom of God to be published to all men, to be given to Gentiles as well as to Jews, then Christ said, "*Go, preach the gospel to every creature*" — "proclaim it everywhere and to all men as with the sound of a trumpet." The great means of its advancement and establishment in the whole world, was to be *preaching*. He himself set the example of this; for he not only preached in the synagogue and in the porch of the Temple, but in the market-place, in the country, and by the wayside.

The apostles, in imitation of the Saviour, who founded Christian preaching in his vocation as "prophet," took up and carried on this great work, sowing the seed of truth

everywhere, making the Scriptures the basis of their preaching, but treating them more freely than the Old Testament preachers, and adding to these inspired writings their own words and teachings as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. *Peter's* preaching on the day of Pentecost has been called "the first Christian sermon," but we prefer to date Christian preaching from a higher source. *Paul's* preaching was certainly no rude or rambling address; and although it was not, as some have contended, formed upon the scientific rules of ancient eloquence, his discourses had a method; they exhibit in their fragmentary forms the graces of the introduction, the vehement logic of the argument, the feeling pathos and direct appeal of the close. His language has a strongly rhetorical as well as spiritual power. Luther said of Paul's preaching, "His words are not dead words; they are living creatures, with hands and feet." Paul, it is true, was an educated man, and had experienced the influence of both the Greek and Roman cultures, as well as of the Hebrew and Rabbinical schools; but the other disciples were also specially gifted to persuade men to be reconciled to God; they were men of sound minds, deeply versed in the Hebrew Scriptures, of popular magnetic power, and, above all, enlightened and inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The special gifts of Knowledge, of Interpretation, of Teaching, in the primitive church, all point to the fact and importance of the preacher's office, or to what Neander calls "the ordinary and regular office of preaching."

The preaching of the primitive church was literally "preaching," or *heralding*, the Glad Tidings, and was characterized by brevity, spontaneousness, and feeling, rather than by argument and labored eloquence. It had less of the didactic than of the simple manifesting or proclaiming element; it had to penetrate the massed heathenism and darkness of the world; it was more addressed to the conversion of the unbeliever than to the building up of believers; still, there seems to have been, in addition to the

expounding of the Scriptures after the manner of the synagogue, something which might be more truly called Christian preaching; impelling men to faith and a godly life, and dwelling greatly on the personal example of the Lord. It had, in fact, first of all, to gather and make the church, which should become the instructing power in the world, which should have its own regular system of teaching, which should be itself "a ministry of the word." "The preaching of the gospel appears in the first period mostly in the form of a *missionary* address to the unconverted; that is, a simple living presentation of the main facts of the life of Jesus, with practical exhortation to repentance and conversion. Christ crucified and risen was the luminous centre, whence a sanctifying light was shed on all the relations of life. Gushing forth from a full heart, this preaching went home to the heart; and springing from an inward life it kindled life, a new divine life in the susceptible hearers. It was revival preaching in the purest sense. Of this primitive Christian testimony several examples from Peter and Paul are preserved in the Acts of the Apostles. The Epistles also may be regarded in the widest sense as sermons, addressed, however, to believers, and designed to nourish the Christian life already planted."[1]

Neander calls these "preachings" in the early church "simple addresses." They must have been such, when we consider how feeble and small were the early Christian assemblies. They worshipped, for the most part, in private houses; and, in times of persecution, in dens and caves of the earth. Justin Martyr says of them, "The presiding officer of the church gives a word of exhortation, and incites the people to exemplify in their lives the good things they had listened to."

Preaching is described by the earliest Christian writers as, generally speaking, a ministerial function, or that of a regularly appointed teacher or minister; although there was

[1] Schaff's Hist. of the Christian Church, vol. i., p. 119.

extraordinary preaching by "the prophets," "exhorters," &c., and also, in the largest sense of the term, by all believers. It is said of those who received Christ as the Messiah, that, in the first strength and impulse of their new faith, "they went everywhere preaching the word;" but the more extraordinary and irregular methods of preaching which belonged to the earliest beginnings of the faith, and to a propagating era, soon settled down into the uniform and ordinary modes of teaching (διδασκαλία). Preaching to regular Christian assemblages, drawn out from Judaic and heathen circles, celebrating together in simple forms the Lord's Supper, and requiring a mode of instruction and *cultus* entirely different and peculiar, characterized the two first centuries of the Christian era; and to this epoch belong *Clement* of Rome, *Polycarp*, *Ignatius*, *Tertullian*, and all the so-called apostolic fathers, or preachers, for they were truly such, of that primitive period.

4. In the *third* century, *Origen* was perhaps one of the first, if not the very first, to construct the formal sermon, or the sacred oration, built more or less on the rules of Greek eloquence. The *homiletical* principle which was sure to come into preaching with the growth of learning and the progress of philosophical thought in the church, received from Origen its first, though perhaps unconscious, impulse; the father of Origen was himself a classical scholar and a trained rhetorician, from whom he received his earliest instructions. Origen took truth out of the Scriptures and treated it homiletically, as a theme (θέμα) of thought, combining it in a synthetic process, and developing it in rhetorical and philosophical forms. He was, in fact, probably the originator of what might be specifically termed the *doctrinal* sermon. He was also the leader in the method of exegetical and expository preaching, in the application of Scriptural interpretation to the practical wants of his hearers; and although so injuriously inclined to allegorical and mystical interpretation, yet he conscientiously made the exposi-

tion of the Scriptures the basis of his preaching and public teaching. Many of his own "homilies" are partially preserved to us, though very much corrupted by Latin annotators and translators.

At the middle or end of the *third* century, owing to the wider power of Christian truth and the more regular character of Christian assemblies, preaching assumed a more prominent and central place in public worship as the best means of instructing the people in the life and work of Christ, although the fire and earnestness of the preaching of the earlier period began sensibly to decline. The work of instruction gradually grew to be exclusively confined to the presbyteral office, although the free laic element in teaching which characterized the early church was by no means as yet entirely extinguished; yet preaching, by this time, whether rightly or wrongly, though it may be on account of the abuse of the privilege by fanatical and ignorant men, was assumed to be a ministerial function; and theological schools were formed in the great cities like the one instituted by Origen at Alexandria, which was, in fact, the first Christian seminary. These schools were under the immediate supervision of individual bishops or presbyters, and were at first gathered together by the fame of some great theological teacher; but afterward, in the fourth century, they were enlarged, and made in a measure independent by the appointment of special instructors. In these schools, together with the study of Christian doctrine, homiletical instruction, with exegetical and dialectical practice, for the purpose of public address, became important branches. To this period belong the names of many illustrious preachers of Christ, such as *Origen*, *Hippolytus*, and the orator and martyr *Cyprian*.

Regular places of assembly, or what we call "churches," were by this time in use; and in the period of the Emperor Constantine, in the beginning of the *fourth* century, we find the "basilicas," or "Roman Halls of Justice," the

largest buildings in the cities, appropriated for Christian worship. The general form and arrangement of these edifices with the apsis, choir, one main and two lateral aisles, became the models of our Christian church edifices down to the present day. The bishop, or presbyter, spoke while sitting, in token of the authority of the divine word; or else from a high-raised pulpit, nearer the middle of the church, called an "*ambo*," or, sometimes, "throne of the preacher." In some churches were two "*ambones*," as may now be seen in the most ancient churches of Rome and Milan; one of these was for the reading of the Scriptures. The people sometimes stood during the preaching; in the church of North Africa, this was the universal custom. The sermon was generally without notes, being chiefly remarks upon the portion of Scripture read, as the lesson of the day, or what was called the "*pericope*," a selection from the Gospels or Epistles. The reading and exposition of whole books of the Bible in this way remained in practice until the *fifth* century, as may be seen in the works of Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, and Athanasius; and this constituted, probably, the chief matter and form of preaching. On special occasions, however, a regular text was often taken, and a sacred oration, with a distinct theme, constructed more or less in reference to the rules of art, was delivered; and there is reason to think that the great preachers of the first five centuries felt themselves free to take any portion of the word of God as their theme, and that the province of the pulpit extended over the whole field of revealed truth.[1]

But preaching soon lost its primitive simplicity and spirituality. It not only began to admit the speculative and polemic elements, mingling human philosophy with the pure Christian dogma; but it was formed too exclusively upon the rules of civil eloquence, and was aimed too much at

[1] Schaff's Hist., vol. ii., p. 478.

rhetorical display. It sometimes called forth popular applause, expressed by stamping or exclamations, as we read of in the preaching of Chrysostom and Augustine, and especially of Cyril of Alexandria: some one would exclaim, "The orthodox Cyril!" "The thirteenth apostle!" Neander, in a comprehensive passage, speaking of the preaching of the fourth and fifth centuries, says, "As to the relation of the sermon to the whole office of worship, this is a point on which we meet with the most opposite errors of judgment. Some, who looked upon the clergy only as officiating priests, and who considered the main parts of Christian worship to consist in the magical effects of the priestly services, were hence inclined greatly to overvalue the liturgical element of worship. The gift of teaching they regarded as something foreign from the spiritual office, as they supposed the Holy Ghost, imparted to the priestly ordination, could be transmitted to others only by his sensible mediation. Others, however, and on account of the rhetorical style of culture which prevailed among the higher classes in the large cities of the East, — this was especially the case of the Greek church, — gave undue importance to the didactic and rhetorical part of worship, and did not attach importance enough to the essentials of Christian fellowship, and of common edification and devotion. Hence the church would be thronged when some famous speaker was to be heard; but only a few remained behind when the sermon was ended and the church prayers followed. 'The sermon,' said they, 'we can hear nowhere but at church; but we can pray just as well at home.' Against this abuse Chrysostom had frequent occasion to speak, in his discourses preached at Antioch and Constantinople. Hence, too, without regard to the essential character of the church, a style borrowed from the theatre or lecture-rooms of declaimers was introduced into the church assemblies; as these were frequented for the purpose of hearing some orator celebrated for his eloquent language, or his power of producing a momentary

effect on the imagination or the feelings. Hence the custom of interrupting such speakers, at their more striking and impassioned passages, with noisy testimonials of approbation (κρότος). Vain ecclesiastics, men whose hearts were not full of the holy cause they professed, made it the chief or only aim of their discourses to secure the applause of such hearers, and hence labored solely to display their brilliant eloquence or wit, to say something with point and effect. But many of the better class, too, — such men as Gregory of Nazianzen, — could not wholly overcome the vanity which this custom tended to foster, and thus fell into the mistake of being too rhetorical in their sermons. Men of holy seriousness, like Chrysostom, strongly rebuked this declamatory and theatrical style, and said that through such vanity the whole Christian cause would come to be suspected by the heathens. Many short-hand writers eagerly employed themselves in taking down, on the spot, the discourses of famous speakers in order to give them a wider circulation. The sermons were sometimes, though rarely, read off entirely from notes, or committed to memory; sometimes they were freely delivered, after a plan prepared beforehand; and sometimes they were altogether extemporary. The last we learn incidentally, from being informed that Augustine was occasionally directed to the choice of a subject by the passage which the 'prælector' had selected for reading; when, as he tells us, he was sometimes urged, by some impressions of the moment, to give his sermon a different turn from what he had originally proposed. We are also informed by Chrysostom that his subject was frequently suggested to him by something he met with on his way to church, or which suddenly occurred during divine service."[1] Reference is made in a note to a sermon of Chrysostom, chosen on his way to church, when he saw, in the winter, lying in the vicinity of the church, many sick

[1] Neander's Church Hist., vol. ii., p. 316.

persons and beggars; and, touched with pity, he felt constrained to exhort his hearers to works of brotherly kindness and charity, and also reference is made to the turn given to his discourse when the lighting of the lamps drew away the attention of his hearers.

5. We cannot enter here into any lengthened analysis of the pulpit orators of the period just mentioned. We will notice briefly but two of the greatest of them, representing the Eastern and Western churches. *Chrysostom* was gifted by nature with splendid oratorical talents, with a fiery vitality, a bold, penetrative intellect, a pungent wit, the graphic power of the imagination, and a deep original genius. He had, too, the training of the most distinguished rhetorician of his day, Libanius of Antioch, who was also the teacher of Basil and of Gregory Nazianzen. As far as he could imitate any one, he built himself upon the apostle Paul as a preacher; and he had the same ministerial zeal burning in his heart. He said, "It is the firm resolve of my soul, as long as I breathe, and as long as it pleaseth God to continue me in this present life, to perform this service, whether I am listened to or not, to do that which the Lord hath commanded me." He felt that he had a special call to be a preacher of Christ — of Christ, not only in his divine, but in his human nature. The *moral* element of Christianity entered largely into his preaching, and he sought, above all, to impress the *practical* truths of religion, and to gain influence over men for their spiritual welfare. He preached on Christian works as well as on Christian faith, dwelling constantly on the life, pouring out the treasures of his heart upon the loveliness of the image of Christ in the believer's character, and striving to build up this inward Christ-like life in the hearts of his hearers. "In him we find a most complete mutual interpretation of theoretical and practical theology, as well as of the dogmatical and ethical elements, exhibited mainly in the fusion of the exegetical and homiletical. Hence his exegesis was guarded against barren

philology and dogma, and his pulpit discourse was free from doctrinal abstraction and empty rhetoric. The introduction of the knowledge of Christianity from the sources into the practical life of the people left him little time for the development of special dogmas."[1]

He had a deep insight into the human heart, and understood men of all classes and characters. He was a fearless rebuker of sin in high places, when it was a perilous thing to attack vice clothed with imperial-arbitrary power. Yet from contemporary testimony, and from the testimony of the sermons we have, his preaching, which made the dome of St. Sophia ring with its rhythmical periods, was characterized by the noblest eloquence, as vigorous, direct, and vehement as, but far more copious than, that of Demosthenes, rich in the play of imagination, and at times inexpressibly tender and pathetic. His discourses, like those of Augustine, rise into high devotional flights, where the incomprehensible nature of God occupies all his thoughts, and the human audience is lost sight of; but, as a general thing, the practical, the pastoral, the missionary element prevails in them — that of the shepherd of souls, of the leader and guardian of the church of God. He glories in his work of *preaching the gospel to the poor!* He varied his style of preaching — now using homely and familiar language; at another time, more stirring, splendid, and energetic language; and at another time, metaphysical and abstruse; for he said that the table of the gospel feast should be covered with various dishes, and the banquet should be like the divine generosity of the Giver. He was eminently a biblical preacher, making, as did Origen and all the great preachers, the interpretation of the Word the basis of his argument, elevating the gospel above philosophy, having the evangelic spirit in his preaching; still, there is philosophy in his preaching, and he appeals to general principles,

[1] Neander, quoted by Schaff, vol. iii., p. 937.

and wields the whole truth with power in its particular applications. He had the free spirit of the Alexandrian school of theologians, whose works he deeply studied. He belonged to the polemic and apologetic age of the church, and was thus led, in his life of mental and spiritual strife, in opposition to the false philosophies of the age, to meditate upon and to bring out the profounder harmonies of truth; but he was such a loyal, practical, pointed Scriptural preacher, of the true apostolic stamp, that he awoke a deadly opposition in the corrupt circle of the demoralized Greek church, which finally destroyed him. The style of his sermonizing, undeniably, was rhetorical, but his preaching was rhetoric in its best sense, being the persuasive communication of truth. He studied his sermons with care, preparing himself to preach by a thorough exegesis of the Scriptures, meditation, and prayer. From his habit of expository preaching, all his discourses do not have an elaborate method or plan, and they are often rambling and diffuse; but they are pervaded by an earnest aim, by the desire to build up the church of Christ, to reform its corruptions, to vindicate the gospel against heathen philosophy, and to pluck souls from the depths of sin and unbelief in which they were sunken. Sometimes, he preaches on a particular subject or proposition with something of the strict order of a classical discourse; but generally he is more free, and speaks the thought to which the Scripture or the occasion gives rise. His sermons, like most of those previous to his time, were rather simply λόγοι (addresses, spoken words, upon the scriptural lesson) than ὁμιλίαι, set discourses.

He preached to the popular heart, and no preacher ever had a more unbounded popularity; the people were often completely carried away by his eloquence, and acted like drunken persons; they said, when he was about to be banished, "Better that the sun should cease to shine than that our Chrysostom's mouth should be stopped;" even

the cold Gibbon praises his golden eloquence, and, as another has said, "his tongue flowed like the stream of the Nile."[1]

Augustine was the culmination of the patristic age as a theologian and preacher, and was, taken altogether, surpassed perhaps by none. Though one of the most profound thinkers of the Christian church, and an original seeker in the vast problems of theology, as well as a brilliant rhetorician and dialectician, he was as a preacher uncommonly simple and direct. Most of his sermons are so plain in their style, and so biblical and spiritual in their themes, that they could be preached with effect at this day; they have that freshness which springs from the central life of Christian truth. They are full of the expression of devotional feeling, often rising to the highest sublimity. There is in his discourses no rigidly logical plan, — for he followed the rhetorical rather than the logical order, — but there is evident unity of aim. While always drawn from some

[1] Of the many "homilies" which we have of Chrysostom, *twelve* are upon the "Incomprehensible Nature of God;" *eight* against the Jews and Heathen, to prove that "Christ is God;" *seven* upon Lazarus; *twenty-one* upon Idol Statues, addressed to the people of Antioch; *nine* upon Repentance; *seven* in eulogy of the apostle Paul, and *twenty-five* upon the Saints and Martyrs; *thirty-four* principally upon certain passages in the New Testament; *sixty-seven* upon Genesis; *sixty* upon the Psalms; *six* upon Isaiah; *ninety-one* upon Matthew; *eighty-seven* upon John; *twenty-five* upon the Acts; *thirty-two* upon Romans; *forty-four* upon the First Epistle to the Corinthians; *thirty* upon the Second; *twenty-four* upon the Epistle to the Ephesians; *fifteen* upon Philippians; *twelve* upon Colossians; *eleven* upon the First, and *five* upon the Second Book of Thessalonians; *eighteen* upon the First, and *ten* upon the Second Epistle to Timothy; *six* upon the Epistle to Titus, and *three* upon that to Philemon; *thirty-four* upon the Epistle to the Hebrews; a great number upon special occasions, the most interesting of which, historically, are those that relate to his first and second exiles. His most eloquent sermons are those upon Lazarus, upon Images, upon Repentance, upon the History of David and Saul, upon the Gospel of Matthew, upon the Parable of the Debtor, upon the Forgiveness of Enemies, upon Almsgiving, upon Future Blessedness. Chrysostom aimed to explain the entire word of God, following it book by book, text by text. — *Paniel, Geschichte der Christlichen Beredsamkeit*, vol. i., p. 609.

portion of the Word of God, they do not always seem to be built upon particular texts; and yet one text is usually prominently brought forward near the beginning of the sermon, and this appears to be the main text around which other passages of Scripture are grouped, and about which the sermon itself revolves. As the moral element was prominent in Chrysostom's preaching, so in Augustine's preaching the doctrinal or *dogmatic* element predominated, and from his example it has entered and ruled in the Christian pulpit to this day. He also, however, like Chrysostom, preached to the popular heart, and was above oratorical vanity, or the ambition to be considered eloquent, though his sermons show the effect of rhetorical and philosophical training. "He often preached five days in succession, sometimes twice a day, and set it as the object of his preaching that all might live with him, and he with all, in Christ. Wherever he went in Africa he was begged to preach the word of salvation."[1]

Ambrose of Milan was also an accomplished and powerful preacher, cultivated by all that the schools could do for him, but far more by the Spirit of God, and he was characterized by dignity and unction. As an exegete, however, from his ardent study of Origen's writings, he had a fatal tendency to allegorical interpretation.

Athanasius, *Basil*, *Gregory of Nazianzen*, *Gregory of Nyssa*, *Macarius*, *Jerome*, and many other renowned preachers of the Eastern and Western churches, belong to this period; and while these were, many of them, thoroughly educated and skilful orators, they subordinated their eloquence and art to the higher purpose of preaching Christ intelligibly to the people; and thus their rhetorical and philosophical culture enriched but did not weaken them as religious teachers.

Athanasius sternly rebuked the ambitious style of some

[1] Schaff's Hist., vol. iii., p. 994.

of the preaching of the day. He said, "If the church were an audience for the hearing of orators, then eloquent words would be in place; but since it was a place of contention for the highest achievements of piety, words were not so much needed there as good conduct."

Indeed, accounts are given us of the degraded character of the clergy of the Roman Empire, East and West, during the fourth and fifth centuries. Gregory of Nazianzen says, "No longer the most worthy, but the most powerful, take the episcopal office;" and Jerome also speaks of many of the bishops and lower orders of the ministry, that "with their scented clothing and luxurious manners, they were more like bridegrooms than ministers of Christ."

During this period, however, in spite of all imperfections and errors, preaching was an important element in spreading and establishing the Christian faith. It was not confined to the Sabbath, but there was frequent preaching during the week, especially on feast and fast seasons, and on the commemoration days of martyrs, and on ordination occasions. The system of expository preaching, of explaining whole books of Scripture, enabled ministers to preach thus continuously day after day. Certainly in the first five, and even perhaps six, centuries of the church, there was, with all errors and superstitions, an earnest desire to interpret and set forth the word of God to men; and this was undoubtedly the chief purpose and aim of the great preachers we have mentioned.

6. When we come down as late as the *seventh* century, we find that preaching was beginning to sink to those depths of degradation which continued to grow more and more profound, even to the time of the Reformation. The idea of bringing the Word of God to bear directly on the mind and heart of the people was more and more lost sight of, though it was not as yet entirely lost. In the middle of the *eighth* century, at the council of Cloveshire, for example, constituted for the reformation of abuses in the Eng-

lish church, preaching was declared by the bishops to be a duty whenever they visited the different churches; they implied, however, by this fact, that in the interval of these pastoral visitations, the people had no public religious instruction. Afterwards, Charlemagne, in his time, exhorted his clergy to preach on certain occasions; and Alcuin, his adviser, especially strove to renew this duty, which had almost fallen into complete disuse in the German and Gallic churches; but where preaching was renewed, those who preached — the bishops themselves — were rude and unlearned men, and public worship had become a round of senseless forms and ceremonials. True preaching had lost its important place in worship; its light was put out in the temple. Certain "*postils*," as they were called, delivered after the reading of Scripture, were short discourses or commonplaces that were manufactured to be recited by the preacher. They had for their principal themes the authority of the Roman Catholic church, the glory of the Virgin, the efficacy of relics, the flames of Purgatory, the utility of indulgences, and similar topics.

In the *ninth* century, at the councils of Mayence and Langres, some earnest effort seems to have been made to renew the office of regular preaching in the church; and it was decreed that the Christian faith should be taught to the people, and the Bible expounded in their vernacular, in such a way that they could understand what was spoken. These, however, were but transient efforts, gleams athwart the darkness, that did not influence the deep prevailing want of religious instruction from the pulpit; and all that related to public worship grew more and more sensuous and puerile. From the *twelfth* to the *fourteenth* centuries, there was much preaching in the common tongue by itinerant friars of a highly fanatical kind. They dealt with the fears and superstitions of the people, who were indeed but children in their hands. One of the chief aims of this preaching was to induce the people to enter upon the church's

pilgrimages and crusades. That was the time of *Peter the Hermit*, and of the greater and truly eloquent *St. Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux*. With the exception of here and there such a man of native genius, and true, though misguided, zeal, preaching was generally but the blind leading the blind. Brawling and ignorant priests used their spiritual authority, and their office as leaders of the people, to foment discords in the state, to fasten the chains of ecclesiastical tyranny more firmly, and to carry out their own crafty and evil purposes. The period even immediately preceding the Reformation, witnessed a most profound depth of degradation in the manner and matter of preaching. The harangues of the pulpit were addressed to the lowest passions, and, above all, to the sentiment of the marvellous; and they consisted in the detailing of absurd legends hatched in the brains of half cunning, half fanatical monks, in the cells of monasteries. Mummeries and buffooneries were enacted in the pulpit. Anything like a pious sentiment was considered insupportable; and at the Easter season especially, preachers taxed their ingenuity to invent all kinds of fables, odd stories, and vulgar witticisms, to amuse the audience, and to excite roars of laughter.

There were, of course, as we have hinted, all through the middle ages, some eloquent and able preachers in the Romish church, such as *Nicholas of Basle*, *John Tauler*, and *Henry Suso* the Dominican, and, above all, *Wickliffe* and *Huss*, in the *fourteenth* and *fifteenth* centuries, who were especially powerful because in them the truth burned in the darkness, because they were reformers before the Reformation; but, generally speaking, preaching had come to such a pass, that when Luther arose, in the beginning of the *sixteenth* century, he saw the necessity of reforming not only the church, but the pulpit itself, and the church through the pulpit.

7. *Luther* reintroduced into preaching biblical truth — in a word, the evangelical element. He also brought into the pulpit a new and elevated spirit, and plucked up preach-

ing from the mire into which it had fallen, and reinstated it as the central light in the house of God. He restored the true idea of preaching, viz., to bring divine truth to bear upon the conscience and sympathies of men. He returned to the source of power, to the Word of God. He was "*mighty in the Scriptures.*" The great work which he did, though aided and confirmed by his writings, was chiefly carried forward by his preaching; and this accounts for the roughness, harshness, coarseness often, of his style of preaching. "His words were half battles." He said of himself and of his preaching, "I was born to fight with devils and factions. This is the reason that my writings are so boisterous and stormy. It is my business to remove obstructions, to cut down thorns, to fill up quagmires, and to open and make straight the paths; but if I must, necessarily, have some failing, let me rather speak the truth with too great severity than once to act the hypocrite and conceal the truth." The chief source of his power as a preacher, next to his fidelity to the word of truth, to the essence and life of the gospel, was his vast emotional power, his passion, his immense vitality. His was a great nature, full of great affections and great feelings. His sermons remind one, in some respects, of those of Augustine, upon whom he modelled himself. They are plain and practical, springing from the running exposition of Scripture, often without any particular text; but still, as a general rule, all the principal parts of the sermon — the text, the theme, the exposition, the argument, and the application — are found in his discourses. A large portion of them are upon doctrinal subjects — upon the nature of God, the Trinity, the creation; upon sin, justification by faith, and the character and work of Christ; upon the church and its sacraments — but all, with a strong controversial drift, mingling the contests that then were going on with the older conflict of light and darkness, of God and his enemy. He did not despise the aids of learning and rhetoric in

preaching, nor, indeed, any other lawful weapon; such as figurative illustration, allegory, irony, and wit. He introduced nature into the pulpit, as well as learning and faith. The preaching, also, of *Zwingle*, *Calvin*, and *Farel*, of *Bucer*, *Barnes*, *Knox*, *Cranmer*, *Latimer*, *Jewel*, *Hooper*, and the other English Reformers, aided to restore the dignity, earnestness, and biblical authority of the pulpit. The preaching of the Reformation, wherever its seeds were carried, was characterized by its *biblical* element, its directness, its freedom from ecclesiastical forms, its plain style, and its robust energy. It did not deal so much in moral or subjective views of truth as in its objective doctrinal aspects; but the mind, freed from its fetters, stood erect again, and transmitted the message of God with apostolic power and boldness. This, also, was the period of the revival of letters; and, though feebly at first, yet with increasing strength, the influence of the renewed study of the classic models was felt upon Christian eloquence, and entered more and more into the structure and style of the sermon. The sermon began soon to lose somewhat of its biblical life and pure evangelic element, until, much later, in the age of German and French illuminism, in the *seventeenth* and *eighteenth* centuries, it had become nothing better than polished puerility, when preachers preached upon agriculture, the raising of tobacco, and the Copernican system. The French church in particular fostered this classic barrenness and varnished impiety. The English pulpit was saved from this curse, in a great measure, by the early infusion into it of the Puritan element, when such profound and earnest preachers as Howe, Baxter, Flavel, Owen, arose. Each reformed nation, however, retained something of its original spiritual life and pulpit power, and became at length intellectually represented or expressed by its own peculiar style of preaching. In Germany, France, England, Scotland, and afterward in America, the shaping influence of the national mind, unbound by freer Protestant influences,

acted powerfully on the type of preaching in these several countries, and this reacted on the political, intellectual, and social character of the civilization of these several nations.

8. The *German* pulpit still retains something of the freedom, fire, and naturalness of Luther's style, being characterized by its lively exposition of the word of God, accompanied with much emotional glow. The German mind, from the earliest times till now, is distinguished above all by its power of sympathy, and this is shown in German preaching; while, singularly enough, the metaphysical taste of the German mind is more rarely shown in its preaching. The German sermon is generally expository or hortatory, rather than analytic and didactic; it gives considerable play to the imagination, and in its plan and substance is simpler than the English or French sermon. There is, however, a class of more modern German preachers, such as *Schleiermacher*, *Müller*, and *Tholuck*, in whose sermons much of the German subjectivity and philosophic cast of mind is seen; but even in these there is a child-like simplicity and a devotional feeling which have not been entirely extinguished by learning and thought.

9. The *French* pulpit is classic and brilliant. *Jacques Saurin*, who is, perhaps, its most eloquent Protestant representative (though his ministerial life was spent at the Hague), aimed at the great end of preaching — the spiritual welfare of men. He therefore stands higher as an evangelical preacher, though not as an orator, than most of the great Catholic French preachers. He was one of the first Protestant preachers who adorned the plain, didactic method of the Reformed pulpit with the ornaments of eloquence.[1] His sermons have an elaborate method, and are built on the plan of a classic oration; indeed, he rarely puts off his oratorical robes. His "introductions" are often very beau-

[1] Histoire de la Prédication aux Dix-septième Siècle, p. 599.

tiful, and he follows the strictly logical method in the development. His style is clear, vivid, energetic, at times almost rough, and rather deficient in pathos and unction. He opened the field of Christian ethics more widely and boldly than his predecessors, but he was, more than all, and in spite of all, an earnest, practical preacher of the gospel.

We usually think of the French pulpit in connection with the brilliant and world-famous names of the great Roman Catholic preachers; but there was also a class of noble French contemporaneous Protestant preachers, who are too often overlooked. Bossuet said of *Calvin*, who belonged to an earlier date, "*son style est triste;*"[1] but Calvin, stern theologian though he was, was yet a great preacher. He had a style totally bare of ornament, and with no ray of imagination, though he lived within the shadow of Mont Blanc; but his preaching was weighty with biblical truth, clear in reasoning, and burning with an intense purpose. Coming after him, and possessing much of his spirit, from the middle of the sixteenth to the middle of the seventeenth century, there are names of many men of remarkable power as preachers—*Pierre du Moulin*, *Michel le Faucheur*, *Jean Mestrezat*, *Jean Claude*, *Pierre du Bosc*, and others. They were pastors of the French Protestant church in times of its distress and persecution, when it was "the church in the wilderness." They were also statesmen, and leaders and counsellors of the people; they were—that is, the earliest of them—somewhat rude in style, but solid, scriptural, full of the primitive fire. Their sermons are generally a continuous exegesis of the text, which they evolve, explain, and enforce with all their power, depending on the truth to perform its own work in men's hearts. Like the English Puritans, whom they much resemble, they preached to the conscience, but they had more directness, liveliness, and simplicity. The oratorical and literary elements were, mostly, lacking in their

[1] Histoire de la Prédication aux Dix-septième Siècle, p. 3.

preaching, but those qualities were replaced by masculine plainness and vehemence. Men of martyr-spirit, they spoke with irresistible power in times of persecution for the truth's sake. Du Moulin was looked upon as a formidable antagonist of the Romish church, and Claude was considered to be a match, in controversy, for Bossuet himself.

These preachers were not far removed from the first heat of the Reformation, and they preached with a fearless earnestness that counted all things loss for Christ's sake and the gospel's. Saurin, of whom we have spoken, and who fell upon later and more peaceful days, finishes the list of great Protestant preachers; and he showed their spirit.

The more widely known and celebrated French Catholic divines are headed by *Bossuet*, "the Eagle of Meaux." He has been not unjustly compared to Demosthenes. His sermons abound in passages of the utmost grandeur and force. His six "oraisons funèbres" are full of majesty of tone, and have a breadth and freedom of style far beyond that of all other French preachers. He despised the minute and fine-spun styles; but his faults also are great, having a tendency to stage effect, or the false sublime, and to an imperious harshness and virulence of language. He was devoted to his church rather than to the simplest and highest objects of preaching, and he was the indomitable, untiring servant of the Papacy, or, as he called himself, "*Bos suetus aratro*."

Massillon is moderate and self-contained, even in his most impassioned and ardent utterances; and this noticeable "*vis temperata*" of Massillon is one chief source of his eloquence; it marks reserved force — a great quality in preaching. *Fénelon*, whose name cannot be mentioned but with admiration and affection by all who love Christ, united a polished but easy and natural style with spiritual simplicity and unction.

10. The *English* or *British* pulpit is excelled by none in its great names. It is robust, practical, sober, direct;

though it is not without its highly speculative and even mystical side. Its greatest preachers lived in the seventeenth century, which was the golden age of the English pulpit, when the Puritan strength and fire, caught from direct communion with the Holy Spirit, were still unadulterated. Even in the latter portion of the previous century, during the fires of the Reformation in Elizabeth's reign, the emancipation of the English mind showed itself in the new vigor and spiritual freedom of the pulpit, and many devoted preachers of the pure gospel, like *John Rogers*, *Henry Smith*, *Bernard Gilpin*, were true precursors of the more learned and eloquent of the Puritan divines of the next reigns, whose preaching was massive in philosophic thought, with a hard rind of controversial theology, but informed and instinct in every part with spiritual light and living energy — the age of *John Howe*, *Flavel*, *Calamy*, *Owen*, *Bates*, *Charnock*, *Baxter*, and their powerful compeers of the Church party, *Hooker*, *Donne*, *Bishop Hall*, *South*, *Barrow*, *Jeremy Taylor*, *Leighton*. Hooker and Donne, it is true, belong also to a somewhat earlier period, and they possess much of the richness and power of the wonderful Elizabethan age of intellectual development. Old Fuller says of Hooker, "Mr. Hooker his voice was low, stature little, gesture none at all, standing stone still in the pulpit, as if the posture of his body were the emblem of his mind, immovable in his opinions. Where his eye was left fixed at the beginning, it was found fixed at the end of his sermon; in a word, the doctrine he delivered had nothing but itself to garnish it. His style was long and pithy, driving on a whole flock of several clauses before he came to the close of a sentence. So that, when the copiousness of his style met not with proportionable capacity in his auditors, it was unjustly censured for perplext, tedious, and obscure. His sermons followed the inclination of his studies, and were for the most part on controversies and deep points of school divinity."

In the other preachers of this period there was a rich play of the imagination, and often great eloquence: perhaps there are no passages of more eloquence to be found in the sermons of any preacher than in those of Dr. Donne; but they are "purple patches," interwoven with a great deal that is rhapsodical and feeble. *Charnock* is vigorous and masculine, perspicuous, and oftentimes profound.

Of English sermonizers, *Robert South* is to be particularly noticed. He very much lacked, it is true, the pure evangelical element; he also lacked unction, and he had more wit than grace; but he was, notwithstanding, a great moral reasoner, reasoning not in dry scholastic forms, but with freedom and immense natural force, lashing vice with an unsparing hand. His English style, for nervousness, point, masculine energy, freedom from false ornament and vital freshness, is incomparable.

Isaac Barrow was also a great master of the moral-descriptive style of preaching; but his language does not compare with South's for condensed vigor, and it is overburdened with qualificatives, inclining even to verbosity.

Jeremy Taylor cannot be judged of, superficially; for he is like a mountain or a kingdom. He affords illustrations of all kinds of style, of the best and the worst. There is too little of clear doctrinal truth, in his sermons; of Christ as Intercessor; but still his sermons and writings are vast treasures of theology, though his works are better adapted for private reading and meditation than for imitation in the pulpit. To read him is like looking into a gorgeous sunset; there is often a vagueness and indistinctness in the ideas, but it is a glorious and sublime illumination of the earth and heavens, an indescribable magnificence of imagery, through which his imagination shines like the sun. He might have been born in the Orient and reared in a "garden of spices," nor would David and David's royal son have despised his companionship, nor failed to acknowledge the kinship of his genius.

In the *eighteenth* century, although preaching was characterized by less richness, originality, and still less spontaneity, there were, nevertheless, some effective and faithful preachers, who saved the spiritual character of the English pulpit: such men as *John Newton*, *Thomas Scott*, *Drs. Watts* and *Doddridge*, *Cecil*, *Charles Simeon*, *George Whitefield*, and *John Wesley*. The last two stirred the stagnant atmosphere far beyond any power of mere human eloquence, and their influence is deeply felt to this day in England, America, and the world. *Whitefield* was an accomplished rhetorician and pulpit orator, but it was his intense earnestness, his burning desire to save souls, his power of emotion and sympathy, his plain, pointed, arousing appeals to the heart, rather than his intellectual force or theological weight and thought, which constituted his power.

There was also, in this period, a school of sound intellectual and philosophic, though somewhat cold, preachers, represented by such men as *Cudworth*, *More*, *Tillotson*, *Stillingfleet*, *Lloyd;* and these were followed by another school (their lineal successors) of still more polished but even less earnest and effective preachers, represented by *Clarke*, *Sherlock*, *Blair*, *Paley*, and men of that class, who represented preëminently the "*moral-essay*" period of English preaching — correct, elegant, and superficial. Indeed, at the time of the rise of the Methodist reformation, there were but few evangelical and earnest preachers in all England. It is related of the celebrated Blackstone, in the early part of the reign of George III., that he went diligently through the churches of London, and declared that "he did not hear a single discourse which had more Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero, and that it would have been impossible for him to discover, from what he heard, whether the preacher was a follower of Confucius, of Mohammed, or of Christ."

Nearer to our own day arose a class of far more powerful divines: *Robert Hall*, — the most magnificent of pulpit

orators, though lacking somewhat in warmth and practical directness, — *John Foster*, *Andrew Fuller*, *William Jay*, and their great Scotch contemporaries *Edward Irving* and *Thomas Chalmers*. A Scotchman said of Dr. Chalmers that "he owed his power to the activity and quantity of his affections." He had, indeed, like Luther, a great nature, ample in all its proportions of reason, sensibility, and will; there was in him a vast vital force; and when this was fully aroused by the truths which he preached, he carried all before him, as a river that inundates its banks.

The British pulpit of our own day has exhibited many men of very decided power, such as, in the established church, *Arnold*, *Hare*, *Whately*, *Trench*, *Samuel Wilberforce*, *Henry Melville*, *John Henry Newman* in his better days, and that matchless sermonizer, *F. W. Robertson;* among dissenters, *John Angell James*, *Dr. Raffles*, *Baptist Noel*, *Drs. Guthrie* and *Candlish*, *McCheyne*, *Thomas Binney*, *Alexander Raleigh*, *Charles Spurgeon*. English preaching, it must be said, has, generally speaking, fallen into a somewhat narrower range of ideas, and does not appear to have the freedom, profound depth, solid thought, or literary splendor of its earlier days, being too often intensely devoted to an ecclesiastical idea; and, if it has aught remaining of the old Puritan energy and assertion of the free principle, it does not always possess the corresponding Puritan spirituality of tone. There are, however, in all the various bodies of the English religious world, many preachers of great learning and originality, as well as of high earnestness of aim, who represent the advanced state of religious thought in England.

11. Coming to *America* and *New England*, we find that, while the first ministers were educated and able men, the true leaders (ἡγούμενοι) of the people, and men of inflexible martyr-spirit; their style of preaching was exceedingly scholastic and theological, owing, perhaps, to the fact that all the learning in the community was confined to the min-

isterial class; but, notwithstanding this, such men as the Christ-like *Eliot*, *John Cotton*, *Thomas Hooker*, *Nathaniel Ward*, *John Davenport*, the *Mayhews*, *Roger Williams*, the *Mathers*, were preachers of marked power, and, in most instances, of eminent piety, and highly learned for their day, when the people considered a learned ministry to be a first necessity of life — as necessary as "fire to a smith."

About the beginning of the second century after the settlement of New England, there sprang up a style of preaching far superior to that of the earliest ministers; which, for metaphysical depth as well as spiritual earnestness, has rarely, if ever, been surpassed. Its great master and originator was *Jonathan Edwards*, who was followed by *Hopkins*, *Bellamy*, *Edwards* the younger, *Emmons*, *Dwight*, and many other noted preachers and theologians, who showed the controlling influence of Edwards's mind, which has, in fact, moulded the American pulpit in all its essential qualities and characteristics, down even to the present day.

The power of *Jonathan Edwards* as a preacher is represented to have been tremendous. In his sermon on "the Last Judgment," one of his hearers said that he "expected, when Mr. Edwards stopped, that the heavens would open, and the Judge descend, and the separation of the righteous and wicked immediately take place." His style, regarded in a literary point of view, was not finished, and was often, on the contrary, hard and rugged; but his clear mind shone through it, and by the pure force of his mental vision he made spiritual truths plain. This *graphic* power, as it has been called, of exhibiting truth showed not only his force of thought, but his luminous and all-penetrating imagination. He felt the want of early culture in the art of writing, and set himself in middle life to the work of improving his style; but thought was the important element of his preaching: he addressed chiefly the understanding and conscience. His sermons were carefully written with

a methodical plan. He dwelt on the explanation of Scripture, which he presented as a fact the most momentous to the soul; and his idea seemed to be that the truth — the simple truth — made clear to the mind, and there left, was sufficient to do its own work. He preached from a divine point of view, wielding the attributes of God, especially those of justice and holiness, with mighty power, and with a kind of celestial, inexorable logic; but he did not bring out so clearly the love of God, and the grace of the gospel. His own purity and holiness of character added weight to what he said, and in the immediate results of his preaching few apparently have equalled him. His sermons were wonderfully adapted to awaken the New England church, then fallen, through the influence of the "Half-way Covenant" and other causes, into an apathetic and dead state. They startled his auditors like the notes of the judgment-trump.

The sermonizing of Edwards and his immediate successors was characterized, as we have said, by a faithful exposition of the Scriptures, and by a careful drawing out of the doctrine, which they fortified with all manner of illustrative reasoning, moral and metaphysical; and after that came the application, which included often more than half the sermon, and was very solemn and pointed. This saved the preaching from being altogether too abstract and metaphysical. It had, doubtless, great faults, which have since been more or less corrected; and which will doubtless be still more successfully guarded against as a better taste and a profounder knowledge of the life of the gospel prevail; but the American style of preaching, according to the principle we started with, is also the direct product of the intellectual character and the religious history of the American people. It unites the argument-loving or logical element with the more practical element of the American mind. *Doctrinal* characterizes it; but it is both doctrinal and experimental; it aims to reach the conscience and will through the understanding, and to bring men to an *imme-*

diate decision in matters of the soul. It deals with these doctrines as if they were the greatest of truths, and the only truths worthy of an immortal soul's attention. It is therefore characterized by the most intense and often terrible earnestness. And why has not the Holy Spirit guided also in the preaching of American ministers of the Word, adapting it to the character, circumstances, and wants of the American people, just as truly as in the preaching of those apostolic ambassadors of old, who delivered the message of God to the Jews, Greeks, and Romans?

The American sermon, as we have already described it, is generally built upon a logical plan, cast into the form of an argument, with direct and practical lessons drawn from the demonstrated truth; it is synthetic in form, and although generally biblical in tone and aim, yet it is not simply biblical as confining itself to the interpretation of Scripture and the setting forth of the Word of God; it is not satisfied with this, but it aims at a philosophical systemization of divine truth. Indeed, there has been sometimes a want of the more genuinely evangelic element, a want, one might say, of Christ in his fulness, in his perfect sympathy, in his love to man, and in the multifarious and infinite relationships and applications of his incarnation, and of the new life of God that has come into the human soul through Christ's entering into humanity. It addresses the head more than the heart. It is not too intellectual, but too exclusively so; and it has thus a rigidity of form which has not suffered it to come freely enough down to the wants, feelings, and comprehension of all men, so that it might be indeed and in every sense "the glad tidings."

There is recently more of this free and vital element coming into our preaching, and the great fear is, that it will come too fast, and destroy the noble and substantial groundwork of American preaching. One great pulpit orator, in especial, who belongs to a family of theological princes, is

the type and almost founder of a style of sermon which applies the truth to the life in an exceedingly interesting and vitalizing manner. It introduces the new power of the Christian element into every part and every faculty of our nature, and freely expresses the broader sympathies of the gospel for all men. Its faults of secularity, and of a certain carrying of the human element to an extent that oftentimes seems to overlie and obstruct the divine — these exaggerations, we think, will become hereafter toned down, and will leave the soil enriched, like an overflow of the Nile. There can be no pulpit eloquence, says Vinet, without the *moral* element; but the moral, the ethical, is formed upon the dogmatic, and although exclusive dogma without the moral element extinguishes both eloquence and spirituality, yet the moral without the dogmatic also loses its deepest spring and power; a wholesome mingling and interfusing of the two will make the future true eloquence and power of the American pulpit.

The names of our great preachers — of *Samuel Davies*, *John M. Mason*, *Griffin*, *Payson*, the *Alexanders*, *Spring*, *Lyman Beecher*, *Olin*, *Bedell*, *Bethune*, without mentioning eminent names of other denominations, and of living men — are familiar to all intelligent American readers; and, taken together, there probably never has been such a body of preachers, comprising so much of intellectual power, of sanctified earnestness, and of living faith, since the days of the apostles.

What are the main practical lessons to be drawn from this brief survey of the history of preaching? They are, (1) that the preacher, especially the young preacher, should *strive to comprehend and combine the excellences of the different kinds of preaching of all times and ages*, and to enrich and elevate his own preaching by imitating what is good in them; (2) that he should *study to catch the spirit of his own age*, feeling that the spirit sweeps on like wind, and never

recedes; that it always hastens to a higher and fuller expression of the love of God; and he should adapt his preaching to the evident leadings and manifestations of the spirit in *his* day, and to the living men about him, without giving up any of the great essential qualities and characteristics of the true preacher of the gospel, which belong to all time and to eternal truth.

§ 4. *Object and Design of Preaching.*

Considering, then, preaching, now and henceforth, in its more commonly understood sense, as forming part of the regular public service of the sanctuary, it should seek, as its great and chief aim, the praise and glory of God; for it is as truly *worship*, though of a less direct kind, as any other part of the service. While the preaching should harmonize with the other parts of public worship in praising God and in setting forth his name, his love, and his glorious works, especially in the redemption of man through Christ, it should seek also for the praise and glory of God in the actual conversion of men. It should have also this profoundly *practical* aim; and in order to accomplish this, it must aim at two things; viz., to make the truth and love of God known to men; and, to persuade them to obey it. We would say, therefore, more specifically, that the object of preaching is, —

(1.) *To teach men divine truth.*

Its first idea is *instruction* — instruction in the things of God. It is intended primarily for the purpose of publishing the gospel, of *making it known* to men. The preacher tells men plainly what is the new message of God in his gospel, and what are the terms of the gospel, so that they need not misapprehend him. Archbishop Usher says, "Brethren, it will require all our learning to make the gospel plain and intelligible to the whole of our hearers, so that they may thoroughly understand it." Besides this instruction

in what the vital truth of Christianity is for the apprehension of faith, the preacher is to furnish his hearers with all other needed instruction in religious things; in the reasons and proofs of divine truth, by which they themselves will be enabled to "*hold forth the word of life*" to other men; and to be established and built up in the most holy faith: he should seek to give them a broad and thorough comprehension of the doctrines of the Christian religion, so that they shall not be overcome through ignorance and unaware. The *didactic* element, if not the chief element in preaching, thus comes first in the order of time; for men must know the truth before they can obey it. The truth which is presented and made known should be essentially scriptural and spiritual; it should be the pure essence of the word of God, "*the truth as it is in Jesus.*" It may often tax all the powers to present this clearly, and the preaching may be the fruit of severe thought; but while it should have thought, and fresh thought; thought, after all, or the purely discursive process of the mind, is not the principal object even of instruction in preaching. Divine truth in preaching should not be chiefly regarded for the interesting subjects of thought which it opens, but as the will and word of God, which preaching is to so set forth, exemplify, and explain, that it may be "*profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*" The preacher himself is not so much the instructor, as God through him. He is to let the truth instruct. The intellectual or didactic idea of the sermon, therefore, even in relation to divine truth, though a very important, is a secondary one; and therefore, —

(2.) Another object of preaching is, *to commend divine truth to the heart, so that it shall be received to the salvation and edification of the soul.* It does not end in setting forth truth, but it is to impel men, by God's help, to choose and obey it; it is the practical application of divine truth to

meet the great wants of the soul. It cannot, therefore, be classed with any other kind of oration, or address, like the scientific lecture, or the parliamentary speech, for these chiefly address the understanding; but it is a sacred oration for God, to persuade men to be reconciled to him, not next year, nor to-morrow, but to-day. Newman Hall says, "Preaching is the art of producing religious convictions and emotions in an audience. Its effect must be immediate, or it fails as preaching. It must be understood at once. Every thought must be made clear before another is presented. Thus repetitions are often necessary, the expression of the same idea in various forms, and occasionally the repetition of the very same words. Whatever interferes with earnestness of manner should be disregarded. The whole mind should be bent on the special work to be done, and that work is immediate impression. Just so far as the preacher's mind is diverted from this object by his anxiety in respect to the grammatical accuracy of his words, and the perfect taste of every expression, just so far will the sermon fail in impressiveness." If we join with this true but altogether partial conception, the plan of continuous instruction, of the more thoughtful and comprehensive development of divine truth, in order that the people may be well founded in the truth, and built up in the life of faith, we have some just conception of the true object and design of preaching.

Preaching, according to the German writer Schott, is designed, above all, to *edify;* that is, to build up a living faith in men's sensual, sinful hearts; but mere knowledge cannot do this; faith, love, obedience in the hearer himself, must fit him to receive the truth, and to be built up in it. Edification is the improvement of the whole man, and his development in the life of God; and thus it is that the moral, and, above all, the spiritual, nature is the special field of preaching; the spiritual idea and purpose should predominate; the heart of true preaching is Christ — Christ as

the life of our spiritual nature. Its great aim is *to win souls to Christ, and make them Christ-like.* It has been said that Christ need not be in every sermon; but as Christ is the life of all divine truth, and thus must be the end of all preaching, how can he be really absent from any true sermon? To exhibit the truth of Christ requires the spirit of Christ in the preacher, his own spirit of love to men; otherwise the converting energy of the sermon is lacking. All preaching should be "*a word of the Lord*," and should have this characteristic of apostolic preaching; that it leads to Him who is the life.

The design of Christian preaching, then, in the largest and fullest view of it, is, by God's blessing, *so to set forth divine truth, with such clearness, simplicity, love, and dependence upon the spirit of Christ, as to build up men in the whole faith and life of Christ — to convert, educate, and sanctify their souls.*

§ 5. *Difficulties of Preaching.*

Although the common impression is, that any one is able "to preach," or even to compose a sermon, it is nevertheless *a difficult thing to preach.* This prevalent idea of the ease of preaching has been greatly increased by the common and commendable habit of universal religious address, of exhorting in prayer meetings and Sunday schools, and on the platform — good things, but not always good preaching. A popular style of sermonizing, itself, which is easy rather than thoughtful, sensational rather than searching, pointed rather than penetrating, has served to increase and strengthen this false impression.

To compose a good sermon requires many things which a merely literary composition does not. One should possess a fund of knowledge, both of men and of men's thoughts, and, above all, of the Scriptures, to be a good preacher. He should be imbued with the spirit, and filled with the knowl-

edge of the Word of God; and then he should know how to choose his subject, so as to adapt it to men's hearts and their real wants: this requires in him insight and judgment, and some considerable maturity of mind and character. The truth, also, must be reasonably and appropriately set forth; and still more, spiritual truths, the most difficult of all to comprehend and to teach, should be so comprehended by him as to be made plain to others; and that religious experience, that inward condition of mind and heart, that love of Christ and of souls which is fitted for the production of genuine effective preaching, is not often possessed by the most eloquent and learned men; so that it is not every one who can write a good literary composition, or deliver an effective address on other subjects, who can also preach; for true preaching is the result of the combination of many precious qualities of intellect, character, and heart, though these difficulties need not deter from attempting to become a preacher any earnest man who loves the Saviour, and who is resolved under God to do as well as he can; and he need not fear but he will, by God's help, succeed. Preaching cannot be rushed upon with heedless haste, as if one who had some little knack at writing, or speaking, could at once preach a pungent, edifying sermon.

He who begins this work, therefore, should expect hard work; it will draw forth all his energies. Lord Bacon says that there was a proverb among those who presided at the Grecian mysteries that "the wand-bearers are many, but few are inspired." So, even, although it is an ungracious thing to say it, there are ministers who are not, and who do not seek to be, inspired. They will not labor to preach well; they will not learn even the outward collateral means and accomplishments of their profession; they will not learn how to write; they will not trouble themselves about the simplest rhetorical culture; they will not mend awkward habits of delivery; they will not correct a false tone or a harsh pronunciation; they will not take pains to

acquire the art of public speaking, so that they can address an assembly upon any subject with effect; but, above all, they will not grapple with the real difficulties of the setting forth of divine truth in preaching, which requires thought, clear arrangement of ideas, spiritual meditation, and earnest prayer. They are doing, perhaps, all other things except giving their undivided energies to *preaching*. They say there is no need to take so much trouble about these things, for they will be helped at the time of speaking; but they who say that are those who, above all others, need this thorough training; for in God's work, as well as in man's, those who do not work are not helped; and do such preachers deserve to be successful?

Let us, then, come to the conclusion that it is a great thing to preach the gospel; and yet we do not mean, by that, preaching great sermons.

§ 6. *Faults of Preaching.*

1. *Preaching without a strong, impelling purpose.* To preach merely to serve a professional necessity is surely an unworthy object; for there should be in every sermon a definite purpose to convert souls, and to build them up in the faith and life of the gospel. In his preaching, the true preacher grasps men's spirits, and draws them unto Christ, that they may be warmed into new life; there should be this spiritual grasp in every sermon, this laying hold of the souls of men to bring them to Christ. "*The Judge standeth at the door.*"

2. *Preaching too long, and too learnedly expressed sermons.* A sermon should be intensive, rather than extensive or pretensive; there should be more pith and point than elaborate argumentation in a sermon. It is a religious address to men, and not a religious treatise. A common audience does not come together to follow out the painfully elaborate processes of a subtile and critical mind; and so a too discursive

style, which sweeps over a vast deal of ground, which deals with truth too philosophically or abstractly, without positiveness and a definite aim, wastes the precious time allotted, in the hurry and rush of this world's busy life, to the preacher of divine truth. There may be learning, and the results of critical scholarship, in the discourse; but the sermon should not have a tone of learning, for learning deals with the past, and "knowledge should be turned into life."[1] The divinely *practical* element in a sermon should sweep everything along with it. One should not stop to exhibit his learning; and of what great importance is it, after all, to one who has a higher end in view; who has to gain his hearer and persuade him to serve the Lord? We would make a difference between *learning* and *scholarship*, as they are manifested in sermon-writing. We need the last, but we should not exhibit the first; or, to quote from another writer (Ruskin), upon quite a different theme, "The artist need not be a *learned* man; in all probability it will be a disadvantage to him to become so; but he ought, if possible, to be an *educated* man; that is, one who has understanding of his own uses and duties in the world, and therefore of the general nature of the things done and existing in the world, and who has so trained himself, or been trained, as to turn to the best account whatever faculties or knowledge he has. The mind of an educated man is greater than the knowledge it possesses; it is like the vault of heaven, encompassing the earth which lives and flourishes beneath it; but the mind of an uneducated and learned man is like an India-rubber band, with an everlasting spirit of contraction in it, fastening together papers which it cannot open and keeps from being opened."

3. *Preaching sermons addressed to the fancy and the nervous sensibilities.* This is what Shakspeare would call "taffeta-writing." It is striving to rival brilliant and popular

[1] Dr. Brown's Spare Hours.

lecturers, who, by continually working upon their lectures, have made them like polished gems, and have taken everything out of them which is not brilliant and immediately effective. It is also what is commonly called "*sensational preaching;*" since it is determining to produce a sensation on the nerves by words, rather than on the conscience and heart by thought and feeling. It is writing from the motive of exciting men for the moment, and of catching their attention by novelties, rather than of doing them good for eternity. And it is also appealing to a lower class of motives, leaving men's higher nature untouched. It is true that the mass of men will be attracted by this style, and perhaps encourage it; and yet, sooner or later, even they will tire of it; for it is turning the sanctuary into a lecture-hall or theatre; and the results of this kind of preaching are indeed as superficial as those of the popular lecturer and player, for if there are conversions, they are of a doubtful sort, it being poor seed sown in bad soil. In the words of another writer, "This whole business of preaching and hearing for entertainment may be told in these two words, 'deceiving and being deceived.'" We do not say that a preacher should not attract his audience, nor, if he has anything original in thought, or powerful in imagination, or moving in truth, that he should repress it; on the contrary, let him be himself; let him use every power that he possesses; let his thought be fresh, and let him *make a sensation* if he can; but let him not preach for the special purpose of making a sensation, of captivating, entertaining, exciting, drawing. How wasteful the efforts of such a preacher! How terrible the responsibility he incurs! If the objection be urged that the sermon of an opposite character fails to interest an audience, it springs probably from other reasons: the preacher has, perhaps, failed to inspire a true and manly taste in his congregation; he does not put genuine thought, feeling, or spiritual earnestness into his preaching; there is nothing to attract in it; there is no unction; he copies his ideas, and

feigns his emotions, and how can he create a legitimate interest in this way? The preacher should therefore resist the temptation (which is one of the first to assail him) to make a fine, attractive sermon, but let him rather strive to make a *plain* one; and if there is aught of literary or awakening power in him, it will shine out in due time. In saying this we would not be understood as saying anything against true eloquence in the pulpit; but it is difficult to draw the line between the true and false. We find no fault with him who strives, for the sake of the truth, to say a thing strongly, attractively, eloquently; but if he says anything in order to be eloquent, to make *himself* attractive, to build up his own reputation, to produce an excitement for his or its own sake, to gain the name of an eloquent preacher, to make preaching a vehicle for personal or popular influence, — here we detect the false style; it is thoroughly and in the lowest sense human, and not divine.

4. *Preaching too easy sermons.* Antiquity and the authority of the Scriptures have made preaching on the Lord's day a matter of great and eternal moment, a reasoning of God with man, "*the savor of life unto life, or the savor of death unto death.*"

True preaching must, therefore, still continue to be biblical, thoughtful, authoritative; it doubtless may and should have much more of popular application, naturalness, and life; it may come down more truly to the sympathies and comprehensions of all men; but the preparation for the pulpit should continue to be a severe exercise, and the sermon should still deal seriously with great thoughts and themes; it should not play with them.

But, is it objected, how can a minister, with all his other duties, prepare two such thoughtful and faithful sermons in a week? This is a chronic question, and we can answer it only by asking another: "How have the best preachers done this?" In some way or another, they have contrived to preach solidly, attractively, effectively, twice on Sunday,

and every time they preach. Whitefield preached, on an average, ten times a week for the space of thirty-four years, and John Wesley nearly the same number for a much longer time; and Wesley's sermons, if not Whitefield's, were carefully composed. A young minister doubtless has a difficult task at first; but by severe labor, by frequent exchanges, by repeating his sermons, and by not preaching *more* than twice on Sunday, he can accomplish this as others have done. And, as a general rule, *short sermons*, short sermons. One subject, one thought, one duty, fully handled, fully illustrated, fully brought home to the conscience and heart, is enough for one sermon; and, would that young ministers, as well as older ones, could have the sagacity, humility, and independence, to see and follow this rule!

§ 7. *Method of composing a Sermon.*

We will, in the first place, quote two or three passages from Dr. Alexander's Thoughts on Preaching: "I wish I could make sermons as if I had never heard or read how they are made by other people. The formalism of regular divisions and applications is deadly." "In writing or speaking, throw off all restraint. Writing from a precomposed skeleton is eminently restraining. It forces one to parcel out his matter in a forced, Procrustean way. The current is often thus stopped at the very moment when it begins to gush. The ideal of a discourse is that of a flow from first to last." "The true way is to have an object, and to be full of it." "I never could understand what is meant by making a sermon on a prescribed text. The right text is one which comes of itself during reading and meditation; which accompanies you in walks, goes to bed with you, and rises with you. On such a text thoughts swarm and cluster like bees upon a branch. The sermon ferments for hours and days, and at length, after patient waiting and almost spontaneous working, the subject clarifies itself, and the true

method of treatment presents itself in a shape which cannot be rejected." There is great truth in these remarks, but we might be allowed to differ from them in some particulars, especially in regard to *the use of a plan*. We agree fully with the idea that the plan should not be made to restrain or to confine the thought; it should regulate, not repress; it should not be the frigid application of the rule and square to every sermon; but it is often useful as a method of arranging thought, and of employing our materials to the best advantage.

Let us, then, suppose, that in studying or reading the Scriptures, a *text*, or a theme contained in a text, has suggested itself to the mind, although we know that there is no rule in the manner and mode of these suggestions, for the subject of a sermon may come to one in travelling, or upon a walk, or in pastoral visitation, or upon his bed, or at the bedside of the sick, almost as readily as in the study; yet texts and subjects for preaching that are suggested to one *in his regular daily study and meditation of the Word of God*, are certainly the truest, richest, and most profitable subjects for preaching. They seem thus to come to us by the direct inspiration of the Word and Spirit of God.

A portion of truth, a real *subject* of thought, has thus been presented to the mind, which must have something to work upon; for all thought depends upon previous knowledge, and reasoning is simply a deduction from previous facts of which the knowing faculties have taken cognizance. Now, although the subject is thus before the mind, the simple theme is not itself sufficient to keep the mind working; for to begin at once to write upon this subject, is preposterous; to catch up an idea, or half idea, and compose an edifying discourse upon it, without more study and reflection, is to heap up words without wisdom.

After obtaining the theme, the first thing to do is to learn something about it; to read, to investigate, to study upon

it; to draw out from the best sources, and all sources, the real knowledge of the subject; to recall, revolve, and develop it by patient thought. *The thorough study of the Word of God* is always thus a primary work, in order to get at the right interpretation of the passage, and to gain a clear idea of its contents; and then the particular truth thus evolved, the idea which is contained within the text, may be taken out of its connection with the text, and conceived of in its wider relations; and not only the reasons for, but the objections that may be brought against it, may be contemplated. The subject should be looked at in its whole length and depth; all the possible side-light should be let in; and thus the mind works in and through it till the whole is leavened, till the simple thought is fully developed.

All this, perhaps, may be done (if one is preparing a written sermon) without putting pen to paper; for the great thing is to get the mind thoroughly aroused, every faculty of it, and all directed to one particular object. This is the momentum which is required to carry one through. And this should not be a merely intellectual excitement; it should be the stirring of the depths of the nature and of the soul. "A purely intellectual force may arrest and interest an audience, but taken by itself it cannot persuade their wills or melt their hearts. The best sermons of a preacher are generally those composed under the impulse of a lively state of religious feeling."[1]

When one is ready to compose his sermon, the books he has read, the commentaries he has consulted, the notes he has made, might be laid aside for a little while, in order to give the mind time to recover its independent tone and action, and to think for itself.

At this stage, we would suggest that one should rapidly write down his ideas, and the thoughts he has collected together or originated upon the subject, however diverse

[1] Shedd's Homiletics, p. 131.

from each other, and without any particular regard to connection or arrangement; say to one's self, "What definite thoughts, after all this study and investigation, have I really gathered on this subject?" If there is anything so gained, no matter what it is, let him put it down; and these more or less disconnected thoughts will form the nucleus of the sermon, out of which order will finally spring: this is the first step out of confusion towards order; and in this process the inner connections of ideas will begin to manifest themselves more clearly.

By this time (and this may not be a long time) one is ready to form something like a *plan*, because now he has the materials to do it with. No true sermon springs out of a plan, but a plan springs out of study and thought, and is only a help in the orderly development of a sermon. The difficulty concerning a plan has generally arisen from supposing that inspiration comes from the plan. Not at all; it is *but an aid to guide and harmonize thought, not an original source of thought;* and we would therefore not entirely dispense with a plan; for both nature and reason teach us that it is indispensable. Is not creation — God's discourse — carried out on a plan? So every true work should have a plan, an inner unity, some one idea to be developed, some one aim to be attained; and that should guide and shape every subordinate detail, to the furthest and minutest ramification of the theme.

In the mean time, the mind is busy in moulding and fusing what has been thus thrown together in some degree of just quantity and proportion; and truly it were well if the ordering, guiding, and illumining Spirit were invoked to one's aid. The religious energies should have ample opportunity to warm and act upon the subject-matter of thought, and the mind should be kindled with the love of Christ, and filled with the truth; for no sermon should be written without prayer, since no true sermon, even if it is not divinely originated and inspired, should fail

to be guided by the spirit of divine wisdom, truth, and grace.

Then taking hold of it with interest and with absorbed attention (for preaching, above all things, comes under the *nihil invitâ Minervâ*), one should compose as rapidly as possible, with a glow of mind, without the least constraint or care for rhetorical rules, not stopping for a moment to correct or improve. This rapidity is important for the unity and life of a discourse; for let the gold simmer ever so long, at last it should run out in a continuous stream. J. W. Alexander says, "If I have ever written anything acceptably, it has been with a free pen, and from a full heart. Write with great rapidity whatever occurs to you. This you may methodize afterward."[1]

The *finishing* of a sermon is a matter requiring more care, time, and deliberation. Lord Brougham wrote the peroration of his argument on the trial of Queen Caroline twenty times; and even a genius like Goethe said that "nothing came to him in his sleep." Now, is it said, Would you set this forth as the invariable method of making a sermon, or of preparing to preach? By no means. That is but one method, and it has a more particular and distinct reference to the *written* discourse. Different men have different ways of preparation for preaching; let each one follow his own method. We throw this out only as a hint toward some practical method of proceeding to make a sermon, since the question is frequently asked by the theological student, "How shall I go to work to write a sermon?" But when the sermon is finished by the exercise of one's best powers, let it be finished, and let not the mind continually worry itself because it has not reached its ideal. Apelles, the ancient Greek painter, said "he knew when to leave off—an art that Protogenes did not know." One's aim may be high, but when he has made an honest effort to reach it he

[1] Thoughts on Preaching, p. 7.

should be satisfied; for the mind may get absolutely morbid upon this point, and may maunder and complain over its imperfect productions, when the manlier way is to say nothing, and to write better sermons.

§ 8. *Sermons classified according to their Method of Delivery.*

Sermons classified simply in regard to their mode of delivery are, *written*, *memoriter*, and *extempore;* and to begin with that method which is considered to be the least commendable, —

1. *Memoriter preaching.*

Memoriter preaching, called sometimes "reciting," was never so much in favor in this country as in England and Scotland; for it has the disadvantages of the written method, without securing the advantages of the extemporaneous method. It is the written method, though apparently unwritten; one is confined, though seemingly free; he is attempting two processes at once — that of remembering and delivering; and this real want of freedom will surely make itself manifest, if in no other way, by the abstracted expression of the eyes, gazing at vacancy, by which it will be soon discovered that the preacher is "reading from his memory." There is more honesty and power in openly delivering the sermon from the manuscript; for the secret being out that one is speaking from memory, the virtue has departed from the discourse.

Yet it may be said in favor of memoriter preaching, that it serves to correct the written style. One readily discovers, in delivering the sermon away from the manuscript, whatever is stiff and essayish in it, whatever is not suited to be spoken, whatever cannot be delivered easily and naturally. Hagenbach indeed recommends the memoriter style first of all, the written next, and the extempore not at all; and it is interesting to notice what Dr. Samuel Hopkins

says of Jonathan Edwards's preaching: "He was wont to read so considerable a part of what he delivered, yet he was far from thinking this the best way of preaching in general, and looked upon using his notes so much as he did a deficiency and infirmity; and in the latter part of his life he was inclined to think it would have been better if he had never been accustomed to use his notes at all. It appeared to him that preaching wholly without notes, agreeably to the custom in most Protestant countries, and in what seems evidently to have been the manner of the apostles and primitive preachers of the gospel, was by far the most natural way, and had the greatest tendency, on the whole, to answer the end of preaching; and supposed that no one who had talents equal to the work of the ministry was incapable of speaking *memoriter*, if he took suitable pains for this attainment in his youth. He would have the young preacher write all his sermons, or, at least, most of them, out, at large; and instead of reading them to his hearers, take pains to commit them to memory; which, though it would require a great deal of labor at first, yet would soon become easier by use, and help him to speak more correctly and freely, and be of great service to him all his days."[1]

In memoriter preaching, if one can overcome the nervous fear of breaking down, he has certainly gained accuracy of language and deliberation of thought, and he can look an audience in the face and be free in his action. Some men of remarkable memories have succeeded in that style of preaching, and it is wonderful how a verbal memory may be cultivated. It is, at least, a great acquisition to a minister to have his memory stored with passages of Scripture. Even if a minister adopts a written, rather than a memoriter style, he should be thoroughly familiar with his manuscript, so that it amounts to a memoriter style. Scotch

[1] Works of Jonathan Edwards, London ed., p. ccxxxi.

preachers call this method "mandating" — a process which, it is said, may be heard going on with great energy in a Scotch parsonage every Saturday night. Reinhard early adopted the memoriter style. His reasons for it, strongly urged, may be found in his "Letters on Preaching." But, notwithstanding all that may be said in its favor, we cannot heartily recommend this style, for, in addition to the objections already stated, there are these: that by repeating his sermon so many times, in order to commit it, one will be apt to get tired of it; the fire and energy will be taken out of it; a great deal of time is also consumed; and, after all, it is quite impossible to conceal the idea that it has been written, and thus the air of delivering a thoughtful sermon as if it were composed on the spot will have a shade of insincerity. But all these objections may vanish in particular cases.

2. *Written Sermons.*

As to the written sermon, though mostly a modern usage, — for Tillotson may be said to be the originator of the regular custom of preaching written sermons in the English pulpit, — we nevertheless conclude that, with many ministers, it must and should continue to form the staple method of preaching; for all men have not the mental facility, the linguistic gift, and the cool-headedness, to become good memoriter or extempore preachers. The emotions of some men rise too suddenly, like agitated waves, to permit the calm process of making well-expressed and impromptu sentences. Even Demosthenes never ventured upon extemporaneous speaking, but carefully wrote out all his orations.

The subjects which are generally preached upon in the pulpits of a highly-educated Christian community also require that carefulness of treatment, and that precision of statement, which almost necessitate the written discourse; and it may be added that he who does not write out his sermons will be in danger of rapidly deteriorating as a preacher, and of losing his power of accurate thinking. Writing makes

a clear style. The man who does not write does not, as a general rule, present his thoughts clearly. Says J. W. Alexander, "The remedy of sterile reverie is the pen. State down every attainment in your thinking by a verbal proposition. The thing of emphasis is the propositional form. We never have the full use of language as an instrument of thought, unless we cause our thoughts to fall in an assertory shape."[1] The familiar advice of Cicero, in the thirty-third section of the De Oratore, is, "*Caput autem est . . . quam plurimum scribere. Stilus optimus et præstantissimus dicendi effector ac magister. . . . Ipsa collatio conformatioque verborum perficitur in scribendo, non poetico, sed quodam oratorio numero et modo.*" Professor Shepard, in his discourse on the Congregational Pulpit, preached at the annual meeting of the American Congregational Union, in 1857, makes these strong remarks: "We insist, then, that we are not to cease following the fathers in a fervid use of the pen, more or less, in connection with preparing for the pulpit. Some of them, doubtless, placed too much reliance on it. Some come under a servile bondage to it. But it does not follow from this that our wisdom consists in throwing it wholly away. We have said that some of those writers for the pulpit proved themselves as among the most effective that ever stood there. They made men see the truth, believe it, confess it, and be Christians. They made them thinkers, reasoners, orators. The sage of Franklin was the teacher of logic to lawyers. The greatest mathematician of the age was the product of that pulpit; at any rate, he sprang out from before it. In the light of our history we pronounce the clamor raised in some quarters against all writing for the pulpit a miserably shallow and most senseless clamor. The pulpit cannot maintain its moulding efficacy, its ruling position, unless the men thereof are men of the sturdy pen, as well as of

[1] Thoughts on Preaching, pp. 503–506.

the nimble tongue. People, take them as they rise, are greatly given to be lazy; hard thinking is hard work, and lazy men won't do it if they can help it. Let the mere off-hand be the mode and the law, and we shall have mere flippant, off-hand, extemporaneous dribble. It will answer for exhortation, but not for doctrine, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; the thin liquid flow will do for babes, but it will not support the stomachs of men. There are discourses which ought to be made, but cannot be made in this way; crises, wants, demands, which cannot be wholly met in this way." Funeral discourses, occasional discourses, and meditative sermons, cannot possibly be constructed in this off-hand way.

Besides these reasons, which have chiefly regard to the preacher himself, habit may so form a congregation, that they may be as readily and deeply moved by a written discourse as by a freer extemporaneous one. There have been revivals under written sermons, as well as under extempore sermons; among Congregationalists as well as among Methodists. Dr. Chalmers did not seem to lose much by written sermons; and now, though dead, he speaks through them. His unsuccessful efforts at extemporaneous preaching are described in Hanna's "Life," vol. i., p. 342. The editor says he found that "the ampler the matter he had prepared, the more difficult was the utterance. It was not easy for him to light at once on words and phrases which could give anything like adequate conveyance to convictions so intense as his were; and he could not be satisfied, and with no comfort could he proceed, while an interval so wide remained between the truth as it was felt and the truth as his words had represented it. After a succession of efforts, the attempt at extempore preaching was relinquished; but he carried into his study a secure and effective lodgment of the truth in the minds of others, which had so much to do with the origin of all that amplification and iteration with which his writings abound. In preparing for the pulpit, he

scarcely ever sat down to write without the idea of other minds, whom it was his object to impress, being either more distinctly or more latently present to his thoughts; and he seldom rose from writing without the feeling that still other modes of influential representation remained untried."

Here was Dr. Chalmers's security as a preacher of written sermons, — his earnestness to impress truth on the souls of his hearers. In Scotland there is a strong aversion to what is called "paper;" but Dr. Chalmers had — so it was said by a peasant woman of another Scotch preacher — "a pith wi' his paper." During the delivery of his "Astronomical Discourses" on Thursdays during two of the best business hours of the day, the counting-rooms and coffee-houses were deserted, and from twelve to fifteen hundred business men would crowd into the church, great numbers going away because there was no room.

We would add, that even in the most practical light in which this matter can be viewed, the preacher, by skilful management, by gaining a perfect familiarity with his manuscript (having it written out in a clear, large, bold hand), and by becoming in some measure independent of the manuscript, and rising above it, — by filling his mind with the subject-matter, — may be able, in the delivery of the written sermon, to do away almost entirely with the impression that it is not, in form at least, a spontaneous discourse. But the usual awkward and confused manner of reading written discourses is unendurable. He who has good sight and good memory should deliver his sermon standing erect, as if he had no shred of manuscript before him. To see a preacher of the free gospel with his head continually bent over his sermon, and tied down to his manuscript, as if there were no living audience before him, is certainly a pitiable spectacle.

The thing chiefly to be guarded against in a written sermon, is writing and delivering it as if it were a *literary production to be read*, instead of an address to be spoken A

sermon, as has been often said, is a discourse addressed to an audience, and is intended to produce a specific effect upon some particular audience. This idea, ever present, will break up the essay-style of written sermons. Let one never think of reading a sermon, but of *preaching* it. And even while composing a discourse, the audience should be mentally in sight. Henry Ward Beecher has somewhere given an interesting account of the first *sermon* he ever preached, after he had been a preacher some years. The idea that made it a sermon was this: that the living souls before him formed the end of his preaching, — the impressions for life or death produced upon them, — not the sermon itself, which was of little importance. The sermon should be a living word rather than a written composition; and he who preaches Christ as the way of justification and eternal life with any of the earnest feeling which such a truth should inspire, will not be a dead preacher, although he preaches written discourses. The mode is not of so much importance as the spirit and substance. A man dying of thirst cares little whether water be brought to him in bare hands or a silver cup.

In repeating written sermons, it is too much the habit of preachers to snatch up at the last moment, for an exchange, or for a second preaching, a manuscript sermon, without studying it carefully. Every sermon preached, whether written or unwritten, whether preached the first or the fortieth time, should be a fresh discourse. There should be not only an intellectual, but a spiritual reproduction of the sermon; it should be thought out afresh; it should be re-created; it should be prayed over and breathed upon by the same intense feeling as that in which it was composed. It is seldom, indeed, that an old sermon does not need correction and improvement, and even re-writing; for one may have gained new thoughts and experiences on the same subject; at all events, every sermon preached should bear a fresh coinage, and if repeated, it should be *re-minted*.

3. *Extempore Sermons.*

There is, without doubt, a wide-spread impression, that something is greatly wanting in our preaching, and that there is a decided demand for more of practical effectiveness, simplicity, and common interest, in this part of divine service. No thought or logic can make up for the lack of that which excites a real *interest* in the audience. There is an ill-concealed restlessness under the formal style of sermonizing; the thought is too abstract; it wearies the common mind, and is out of the range of our usual habits of thinking; also it is not sufficiently spiritual, and nourishing to the spiritual nature, and people neither understand it nor are edified by it. When preaching "loses out of it the elements of popularity," it is useless and dead. Luther said, "I would not have preachers torment their hearers with long and tedious preaching. When I am in the pulpit, I regard neither doctors nor magistrates, of whom about forty are in the church; but I have an eye to the multitudes of young people, children, and servants, of whom there are about two thousand."

This want has of late been sought to be met by a "sensational" style of preaching; but this is not its remedy, for charlatanism in the pulpit cannot long maintain its influence. A partial remedy of this want would doubtless be in the introduction of a more natural style of preaching, like Luther's, in which the man speaks himself out more freely; and the question thus arises: would not the more general cultivation of the *extemporaneous* style of sermonizing tend to make preaching more natural, free, and popularly interesting? It is certainly well for younger ministers to hear the mutterings of the coming storm, and to direct their attention to this inquiry. Many preachers, who have produced the profoundest results, have been extempore preachers; these have been preachers not only like Whitefield, Nettleton, Spurgeon, and Newman Hall, — men of that type, — but Fénélon, Robert Hall, Schleiermacher, F. W. Robertson; men of a thoughtful and philosophical character

of mind. F. W. Robertson's most finished sermons were preached from "a few words pencilled on a visiting card." Schleiermacher, in the latter years of his life, did not put pen to paper before preaching, but would stand for hours leaning out of a window, meditating his discourse.[1] There is something in the London Baptist apostle's audiences of eight to ten thousand hearers, composed of all classes of society, high and low, which should set us thinking where his power lies. The reformers, Luther, Calvin, Knox, and their contemporaries, as well as the early fathers, the preachers of the primitive church, and the apostles themselves, doubtless, preached extemporaneously. It may be hard for one who has formed the habit of preaching from notes to change his style, although Albert Barnes became an extemporaneous preacher at sixty, and is said never to have preached so powerfully; but for persons entering upon the ministry, and who are determined to avail themselves of all the power which an extemporaneous style, or any other, may give, it seems to be a duty manfully to grapple with this question.

There are certainly strong arguments in favor of extempore preaching:

(1.) *It stimulates the preacher.* It wakes him up. It makes him a quick thinker. It makes him master of his mental powers. It goads him by the presence and sympathy of an expectant audience. It often originates new thoughts of living power, that could not have come into the mind in the calm silence of the study.

(2.) *It breaks up a stiff, artificial style.* Gossner, quoted by Hagenbach, said, "He who is a true preacher is not obliged first to meditate and conceive at a writing-desk what he has to say, but with trustful courage to mount the pulpit and speak, even as, on the day of Pentecost, fiery tongues, not writing pens, fell from heaven on the apostles."

[1] Hagenbach's Grundlinien, Lit. und Hom., p. 137.

In extempore speaking, the preacher learns to go at once to the heart of things, and to express himself in a direct manner. He thus acquires a manly straightforwardness. The elaborate beauties and fastidious elegances of a highly rhetorical style are inconsistent with extempore speaking. Extempore speaking tends also to the concrete rather than the abstract; to vivid manifestation and illustration of thought, rather than technical reasoning. It is less philosophical, but has more of flesh and blood in it; it makes the hearer thrill with something that is taken from the hour in which he lives, the thought his heart is busy with, and the work his hands are glowing with.

(3.) *It is adapted to produce immediate effect.* It enables the speaker thus to feel the pulse of an audience, to meet its exact wants, and to judge of its state by those fine and delicate signs which a skilful extemporaneous preacher learns to detect. It gives the impression that one is really talking to the audience before him, and to no other. Hence extemporaneous preaching is peculiarly adapted to times of revival; and it is a strong argument in its favor, that it does unconsciously take the place of other methods in times of real urgency.

(4.) *It has more of outward and inward freedom.* It gives play to the eye, the arm, the finger, the whole body, and also to the subtler motions of the soul; so that the whole man becomes an instrument for God's Spirit to speak through men. Then speech is electric; then there *can* be eloquence. And perhaps the highest conceivable efficiency of the orator and of the preacher has been brought out in extemporaneous speech. Though every speaker is not capable of eloquence, every true preacher has probably done *his* best at a moment when he was free, when the pressure was on him, when he must speak or die, and when to his own apprehension, it may be, he is making the most entire and conclusive failure. But the people at once see the difference between what is free and what is artificial —

between sincerity and false confidence. Once let it be understood that the strait-jacket has been thrown off, that the soul acts unrestrainedly, and the congregation feels it and rejoices in it.

In this method, the preacher is able to use whatever thought occurs to him at the moment. He is not prevented by fears that it will spoil the unity of his sermon. Locke says, "Thoughts are best which drop into the mind." With all previous preparation, room, nevertheless, should be left in extemporaneous speaking for purely *new* thoughts — thoughts which literally occur at the moment. Sometimes one may change the whole current of his discourse, and dwell upon a thought as the main thought, which he intended to make only a side thought, or, perhaps, not to introduce at all; and this is the ideal of extemporaneous preaching: not often reached, it is true, but sometimes reached, when the speaker is inspired with perfect freedom of utterance.

(5.) *It enables one to use a more conversational style, both of thought and delivery.* This, perhaps, is the greatest advantage of the extemporaneous method, that it serves to abolish a strained style, which supposes certain circumstances, and certain characters, and certain antagonisms, and certain wants, that do not exist in an audience, — — in which style one may write, but cannot talk, — and tends to make preaching more like *ordinary conversation*, without at the same time losing its dignity. Let a man *talk* to his audience, and if he does sensibly and earnestly, every one will listen; just as everybody will listen to any man who converses well. The moment a preacher ceases declaiming, and begins talking, every one wakes up. That is the power of many of our greatest living orators, both clerical and secular. These men do not talk spasmodic nonsense, but their "forte" lies in uttering fresh and substantial thought in the natural language of ordinary and earnest conversation among men; they talk to an audience

as one clever man talks to another; they gradually bring an audience into their own way of thinking by thus stooping to conquer. This style, when kept free from familiarity or lowness, is the perfection of close, affectionate, reasonable, interesting, and effective preaching.

We remember an extemporaneous sermon preached by the French Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec. His discourse was, for the most part, in its substance and doctrine, sheer Mariolatry; yet the immense assembly hung entranced on his words, as he stood, simply erect, without gesture, his hands laid passively on the cushion before him, while he *talked* in a natural tone, in plain but beautifully-flowing periods, and without hesitation.

It was like listening to a strain of pleasing music, with nothing highly wrought, but bearing the minds of the hearers steadily upon its even, calm, and rapid flow. It was not eloquence, but it was nevertheless potent to hold a great multitude in rapt attention, and by its simple charm of natural, unaffected, fluent speech, to command and sway men's minds.

If extemporaneous speaking tends to bring about this result, viz., to put preachers *en rapport* with their congregations, we would say, Let every preacher who can do so begin at once to practise it, even if it cost him a complete revolution of his mental habits. Better live in a cave six months, until he has become master of his own faculties of mind and body, than to be a dead preacher, who cannot, with all his writing, reasoning, and preaching, reach an audience or a soul.

But extemporaneous preaching should be of the right kind — not the semblance and sham. *What, then, is extempore preaching?*

True extempore preaching is *trusting to the moment of speaking for the form of words in which the thought is expressed.* That is all. The carrying of the idea beyond that leads to fanaticism and absurdity. Extemporaneous

speaking has relation to the *language* more than to the thought; it is catching the inspiration "ex tempore" — from the present moment — for the mode of uttering that which is already clear in the mind. Extempore preaching is not unpremeditated preaching. If extempore preaching is made to refer to the speaking of totally unpremeditated thought, as well as language, we would have none of it. Thus purely extempore speaking is out of the question, except in regard to brief expressions of thought and feeling which occur spontaneously in the excitation of the mind upon a particular theme, and do so sometimes in a written as well as an extempore discourse.

Schleiermacher, although he preached extemporaneously, said, "Before going into the pulpit, the sermon, as a whole, — that is, the separate thoughts in their relation to all the members, and to the whole, — should be clearly in the mind."[1] The argument sometimes used for not making a faithful preparation for preaching — that God will now, as in apostolic times, put into the mouth of preachers the words they shall utter — is, at least, highly irreverent. It is also a false view of Scripture, and only an excuse for indolence. There *is* a kind of inspiration, which, at favored moments, comes upon true preachers, in which they do become the mouthpieces of God's Spirit; but this is a very different thing from that audacious assumption that God will inspire one at the moment with just what he should say. Bautain's definition of extempore speaking is this: "Extemporization consists of speaking on the first impulse; that is to say, without a preliminary arrangement of phrases. It is the instantaneous manifestation, the expression, of an actual thought, or the sudden explosion of a feeling or mental movement. It is very evident that extemporization can act only *on the form of words.*"[2]

[1] Hagenbach, Grund. Lit. und Hom., p. 137.
[2] Bautain on Extemp. Speaking, p. 3.

We will give a few *practical hints* for extemporaneous speaking.

(*a.*) *Train yourself to think without writing.* This power of mental abstraction, or what Dr. Brown calls "the imperial presence of mind," is the source of extempore speaking, which has its spring in the thinking faculty. Mental discipline tells on the power of extemporaneous speech. One should have some logical and theological training before he can speak clearly on divine themes; for "that which is well conceived is clearly enunciated," says Bautain. The real ability for extemporaneous speaking comes from having clear ideas, not merely from having the faculty of language. It did not require much preparation for Luther, nor, in more modern times, Robert Hall and John Wesley, to preach on any subject connected with divine truth. These men were always searching into divine truth; their minds were working constantly upon these great subjects; they could preach every day, and every hour almost, as Luther and Calvin did. And so it may be with any man who is a working and growing theologian, and who has cultivated a homiletical habit of mind. Such a man's actual preparation for speaking may be brief. But one, unless he is peculiarly gifted in this respect, when *beginning* to speak extemporaneously, should make careful and particular preparation for it.

(*b.*) *One should think through the subject beforehand.* The foundations should be laid firm and deep. There should be no indefiniteness or obscureness here. Never trust to the inspiration of the moment for the solid parts of the discourse — the main ideas, the arguments, the proofs, the conclusions. These should be thoroughly arranged in the mind. It is a fatal mistake to suppose that extempore preaching will succeed without such previous study; here is the mistake that has lain at the root of failure in extempore speaking. Bautain makes a great deal of what he calls the "main idea;" there must be this *main idea* in

every living discourse, and this should be fixed firmly in the speaker's mind. It will form its own plan, and every detail will group itself naturally about this principal idea. This sustains all, and must never for a moment be lost sight of. "Nothing," says Bautain, "is so fatal to extemporization as this wretched facility of the mind for losing itself in details, and neglecting the main point." One should also avoid the common error, in extemporaneous speaking, of talking a great deal about unessentials; of introducing long and stereotyped phrases of parliamentary or argumentative persiflage as to what he intends to prove or say.

(*c.*) *Prepare beforehand, either mentally or on paper, the actual wording of your main proposition and the principal divisions, and perhaps of some of the most important passages.* It may be recommended, indeed, to some beginners to combine the two methods of the written and extemporaneous sermon; i. e., to write a good portion of the sermon, — the body of the sermon, — and trust the rest to the utterance of the moment. The illustrations, for example, may be given extemporaneously, and will gain decidedly in freedom, vividness, and life. But perhaps it is best at first to write out the sermon altogether, and then destroy it. That will have aroused and clarified the mind; the subject will have become a familiar road for the mind to travel; by and by one can diminish, or give up altogether, the written preparation. The German preachers pursue this method of previously writing their sermons, and then preaching them without the manuscript. The Welsh do it also, and they are remarkable preachers. This, in fact, is F. B. Zincke's famous plan or method of making an extemporary preacher. He says, "Nor will the practice of extemporary preaching deprive a man of the advantage of attaining to that accuracy which is a result of written composition. I am addressing myself to those who have energy enough to persevere for some years, or for whatever time may be required, in the practice of carefully compiling

their sermons during the week, and then preaching them extemporarily on Sunday. The time will come when full notes, containing only the more important parts *in extenso*, will be sufficient, and at last nothing more, in most cases, be needed than such a sketch as may be written on one side of half a sheet of note paper, the rest of the study being carried on mentally, or without the aid of writing. I suppose that for several years more or less of writing will be necessary, because that alone will demonstrate to the preacher that he has mastered the subject, and properly arranged his materials, and so will enable his mind to rest on the fact that it has already produced what it now has only to reproduce in the pulpit. And I can imagine persons preferring to the last to write very full abstracts of what they intend to say, and doing this from a religious regard for their work. A sermon, such persons will feel, is too important a work, too much depends upon it, to justify the preacher in leaving anything to the chances of the moment. This must be done to some extent in a debate, and it may be done generally in secular oratory, when the main object is to please; but it is irreverent and unwise to trust in this way to the moment for the matter or arrangement of a sermon. It will, therefore, I think, be better that the preacher, however practised, should never wholly lay aside the pen."[1] Zincke considers extemporary preaching, instead of being the easiest, to be the most laborious style to attain; he labored for it through a number of years. He was driven to do so through poignant shame at the indolent ease of reading written sermons, and their comparatively small effect upon the audience. He made it a conflict, a long and sore struggle, to overcome the marked inaptitude of his own nature and mental habits for extempore preaching, because he wished to make the most of himself as a preacher, and to be faithful in his work. For a

[1] The Duty and Discipline of Extemporary Preaching, p. 33.

long period, therefore, he gave his earnest study to the composition of his sermons; he wrote them out fully, and rewrote them; though in the pulpit he entirely discarded notes, and spoke from a thorough preparation and a full mind.

Into the pulpit itself, Dr. J. W. Alexander advises, "carry not a scrap of paper. But if a little schedule would give more confidence at first, take it." We should say, quite decidedly, *take into the pulpit a written sermon, or nothing.*

One can learn to swim only in the water. Bautain is strongly opposed to making use of any notes in extemporaneous speaking; he does not even think that the advice of Cicero should be regarded. Dr. McIlvaine says, "Use no notes." Confidence in speaking comes from a trust in one's own mental resources.

(*d.*) *Cultivate the faculty of expression.* "For you must not," says Bautain, "grope for your words while speaking, under the penalty of braying like a donkey, which is the death of a discourse." Not only the power of thinking, but the power of uttering, is to be cultivated; and to have this power — never to be at a loss for the fit word — this itself is a noble accomplishment. The faculty of expression is a part of clerical education that has been too much neglected. Pitt used to translate aloud, in a running method, from foreign languages, being critical in the choice of his words; Cicero's method was to read an author, and then repeat the author's thoughts in his own words. The principle of *association* is a great law of facile expression; for one may accustom himself to remember what he has to say even by a *word* in each proposition or division, — by some word naturally suggested from the text itself; but it is better to remember by the association of ideas, than of words. There is, perhaps, no better way of cultivating the power of expression, than by cultivating the habit of *conversing with facility*, accuracy, and correctness. Let no one allow himself to converse loosely, vaguely, or incoherently, — avoiding both undue precision and undue laxness. Yet there is a certain

mere facility of expression, or fluency, which may become a dangerous gift to a speaker. It serves him in the place of thought, and it will be soon discovered to his injury. It also tends to destroy his power, by giving him an appearance of arrogance, or a dictatorial manner. More of humility, and hesitancy of speech, is sometimes effective in a young speaker. What have been called "fluent, complacent, mechanical utterances" are not enough for the pulpit.

(*e.*) *Make a beginning at once.* Stand not shivering on the brink. Eloquent speaking is gained by always working and striving for the power of free and forceful utterance, and by giving one's whole attention to it, — by coming up to it again and again, even if one fails at first. It is *doing* it, and not preparing to do it. Robert Hall, at an earlier day, as well as some distinguished extemporaneous preachers of the present day, made, it is said, miserable failures at first in attempting extemporaneous addresses.

(*f.*) *Do not choose too easy or familiar subjects.* This is a common error. The mind should be interested in the development of some new and specific truth, in which it may be thoroughly roused and tasked.

(*g.*) *Look beyond and above the opinion of men upon your preaching.* To speak extemporaneously, one must have courage. Let one think more of his duty than of his reputation. If one has this spirit, he will not be disheartened at a blunder, nor even if he now and then breaks down. A little incorrectness of language, or halting hesitation, in extempore speaking, is of small importance, and will not be censured by the audience so much as the speaker imagines — especially if they see he is in earnest. A modern writer well says of a young speaker, "Sometimes a momentary pause — a hesitation to collect the thought and utter the right word — is a becoming act of deference to an intelligent audience."[1] One who has "a mission to teach"

[1] Essays on Social Subjects, from Saturday Review.

is apt to forget that "reserve is an element of strength." It is better not to be always finished and polished. A rough, ragged, imperfectly expressed remark, boldly thrown out and left, is sometimes more suggestive to the hearer's mind than the most elaborate paragraph. One should not go back to improve a sentence in extemporaneous speaking. Let him press on boldly to the end, no matter how he comes out.

But as the undue fear of man vanishes, so much of the imaginary difficulty of extempore speaking vanishes. If a great part of extemporaneous speaking consists in preserving one's presence of mind, what will better enable one to do this than to look beyond man to God?

(*h.*) *Mingle the written and extemporaneous methods.* Let one preach a written sermon in the morning, and an extemporaneous one in the afternoon; and let him never think of writing out his weekly lectures, or other public addresses. But a man who does not write much cannot speak well; therefore it is usually recommended to pursue both methods. Yet, if one will continue to write and study carefully, and not let down his literary standard, but be constantly advancing it, then he may, and perhaps should, strive to make himself *altogether* an extemporaneous preacher. Only let him not get too easy an idea of extemporary preaching; to be of the right kind, it is the hardest of all. If he *can* attain to it, it will keep his mind and body fresh; he will not become the slave of his desk; he will be released from the immense manual labor of writing so much, and from leaving behind him a thousand sermons stored away in a barrel in the garret, to be devoured, not by admiring men, but by mice. All that he esteems valuable in his sermons he can save and write out after preaching, which was Robert Hall's and F. W. Robertson's method. Professor Park remarks that two hundred *good* sermons are enough to leave for a long life.

(*i.*) *Cultivate oratorical delivery.* Here elocution is of

great importance. The written sermon depends much for its interest upon its carefully condensed thought; but the extempore speaker must have everything in himself: he must have the charms of good delivery, the trained voice, the natural gesture, and the dignified and expressive attitude. He needs all the helps that can be given by the eye, the hand, the "eloquence of the body;" for it is with him good delivery or nothing. He should acquire a clear, distinct articulation, rising and falling naturally with the thought; varied and yet even; neat and yet capable of feeling, and of vehement, rending force; and, above all, free from tones of earthly passion, and breathing pure, holy, spiritual emotions. The preacher may be his own master of delivery and elocution teacher. It is thought, chiefly, that does this. It is said that Macready studied the play of Hamlet seven years before he felt himself equal to act it. Every sentence, every word, every syllable, had received thought, so that he was able to bring out its full meaning in delivery, to give it its effective emphasis, to be the vehicle of the spirit's winged words.

This is an intense, unsettled age. Men are full of restless thought, movement, and inquiry. Those who would influence the age must think quickly and act boldly. We are bound to try every method, to strain every nerve, to be preachers equal to the demands of the time, and to seize its opportunities.

If we imitate our true model, Christ, we shall be willing to lose ourselves, in order to gain the great end for which the gospel was given — to win men to a higher life. As ministers of Christ, we are to have really but one business in life, and that should be done well. Our business is *to preach the gospel;* to preach it successfully; to suffer no personal inconvenience, or indolence, or dead theory, to stand for a moment in the way of a living and life-giving ministry. "*Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.*"

§ 9. *Sermons classified according to their Method of Treatment.*

We have spoken of the classification of sermons according to their more external method of delivery; we now refer to the classification of sermons in regard especially to their *internal* character and treatment. In no part of the science of Homiletics (if it be a science) is there more of confusion than in the attempt of authors to classify sermons according to their intrinsic design and character. Every writer has a system of his own; therefore we have not thought it worth the while to enter largely into this matter of classification, but simply to name a few of the principal classes of sermons, and to treat of these incidentally, as they come up afterward, in describing more particularly the composition of a sermon.

As an example of the great fertility of analysis in this field, we quote "Gerard and Campbell's" list of different kinds of sermons, as chiefly adopted by Dr. Fitch. 1. *Critical expository lecture*, on a text difficult of exposition. 2. *Practical expository lecture*, on a text not so difficult of exposition. 3. *Explanatory sermon;* in other words, "instructive" and "explicatory." 4. *Biographical sermon;* in other words, "commendatory," "panegyrical." 5. *Particular demonstrative*, setting forth some one act or quality of a good life. 6. *General demonstrative*, presenting the sum of virtues of one life. 7. *Argumentative;* in other words, "convictive" or "probatory." 8. *Pathetic*, presenting motives without particular reference to duties. 9. *General persuasive;* a duty enforced by fit motives. 10. *Particular persuasive;* a duty enforced by some one motive taken for text, etc., etc. Dr. Fitch, however, thinks that all sermons, in respect of their method of treatment, may be comprehended under the three simple divisions of *Explanatory*, *Argumentative*, and *Persuasive* sermons. While he thinks that, on the whole, the

topical or synthetic form of a sermon is the most profitable, he is in favor of variety in the forms of presenting divine truth, and even of variety in the treatment of a particular passage or text, sometimes taking the explanatory form, sometimes the argumentative. He is of the opinion that the *explanatory* form allows of the greatest range and scope of thought, being not merely confined to the explanation of a text, but of a given truth or doctrine drawn from a text. It addresses the understanding rather than the passions, and is the ordinary method of laying open the vast treasures of scriptural truth to the human mind. Discourses relating to *life and character* are difficult, but profitable as setting forth truth "in living characters." The great danger is in overstepping the strict bounds of truth. *Argumentative* discourses Dr. Fitch considers to be best for young writers, for youth is the argumentative age, and such discourses are the most easily susceptible of unity of treatment. But stiff, scholastic forms of argumentation should be avoided; the logic should be animated with sentiment and feeling. The unity of the *Persuasive* discourse consists not so much in having one subject or argument, as in having one tendency in the various parts to affect the will and feelings. We would offer the following more simple classification of sermons in relation to their mode of treatment: —

1. As depending upon the *manner of treating the text:* (a.) *textual;* (b.) *topical;* (c.) *expository*, or *exegetical-expository.*

2. As depending upon the *manner of treating the subject:* (a.) *doctrinal;* (b.) *ethical;* (c.) *metaphysical;* (d.) *historical.*

3. As depending upon the *general rhetorical treatment:* (a.) *argumentative;* (b.) *meditative;* (c.) *descriptive;* (d.) *hortatory.*

We will not enter now into the particular discussion of these different kinds of sermons, as something more will be said on this point under the head of the "Development" of a Sermon.

One sermon sometimes, in fact, combines all, or nearly all, the characteristics of treatment which have been mentioned; although generally in one sermon some one quality, or some one characteristic of matter or form, decidedly predominates, which gives it its stamp; but even the simple classification which has been made shows the *great variety* there may be in the treatment of religious truth from the pulpit. A preacher, from his peculiar character of mind, may naturally fall into one habitual kind of discourse, say the doctrinal; but he should guard himself against too great a uniformity. He should seek variety. He should not always preach argumentative sermons, dealing only with rigorous logic; but he should now and then write an *historical* or *illustrative* discourse, expounding and enriching his theme with the fruits of learning, extensive reading, and the study of human nature. Here the imagination has scope. The *moral-descriptive* sermon has gone too much out of use. Two of the noblest and most interesting of Dr. Fitch's discourses are "on the sacrifice of Isaac." They abound in eloquent descriptive writing, in which the picture is wrought to the highest degree of the morally picturesque. The conversation between Abraham and Isaac, and the thoughts of Abraham, as the father and child climb Mount Moriah, are imagined with great pathos and power, and every minute circumstance in the narrative is seized upon and enlarged with the greatest dramatic skill. This is a legitimate use of art. Such sermons can never be forgotten by those who have heard them. Power is lost by confining ourselves too exclusively to the didactic and argumentative style, and not taking advantage of the rich narrative, poetic, and dramatic portions of the Bible. The *textual*, or, more strictly, *textual-expository* sermon, where the lesson of the text, or the idea contained in the passage, is grasped and developed, in addition to the simple explanation of the passage, is, perhaps, the best style of preaching. This combines analysis and synthesis. The method of *continu-*

ous exposition of the Scriptures in some regular course of pulpit instruction is a good plan, and is also, as we have seen, a very ancient method of preaching. Some such method of reading and expounding the Scriptures in course as exists in the English and Lutheran churches, under the system of "the Christian year," is worthy of attention; for a minister should have some thoughtful and regular system in his preaching, in order to present to his people as much of inspired truth as possible, and to bring forth from his treasury "*things new and old.*"

SECOND DIVISION.

THE ANALYSIS OF A SERMON.

§ 10. *Parts of a Sermon.*

UNDER this head we refer to those *constituent elements of a discourse which demand attention while in the process of constructing a sermon.* These, however, need not be distinctly and formally expressed in every sermon; but they belong to the essential structure, the osseous framework, of every intelligible discourse, which must be made conformable to the laws of the human mind. In any formal address we cannot dispense with such grand divisions as the Introduction, the Argument, and the Conclusion; for every true discourse must have at least a beginning, a middle, and an end; and the beginning and end are naturally of less dimensions than the middle. In like manner every human frame has a head, body, and extremities; every rock has a foot, middle, and summit; every tree has a root, trunk, and crown.[1]

[1] Hagenbach's Grundlinien Lit. und Hom.

Vinet's analysis of a sermon, in his Homiletics, is somewhat technical, and comprises the following parts: 1. The Subject or the Text. 2. The Homily or Paraphrase. 3. The Matter. 4. The Explication. 5. The Proof.

A less formal and technical, yet plainer and more extended analysis, would be the following, which we shall adopt: 1. The *Text*. 2. The *Introduction*. 3. The *Explanation*. 4. The *Proposition*. 5. The *Division*. 6. The *Development*. 7. The *Conclusion*.

This general method of partitioning a sermon varies in different sermons. It depends, in fact, upon the nature of the discourse itself, which develops its outward form according to its own internal law, and has, or should have, one individual organic unity.

It is our intention to exhibit, not the invariable form of every individual sermon, but rather the parts that legitimately enter into, and that generally should and do enter into, the composition of a well-constructed sermon. We shall try to present the *ideal* sermon in all its parts; and although the logical method of partition is regarded, yet it is chiefly the rhetorical, or the practical, or, more truly still, the natural order that will guide us; for, to use Vinet's words, "the dynamical is preferable to the mechanical style of sermon."

§ 11. *The Text.*

The text — from *texo*, "to weave," or *textus*, a "web," — is that which forms the "web," or "tissue," or "main thread," of the discourse. The "text" of a sermon is, of course, some genuine word of Scripture; although the Bible itself, as a whole, is, *par eminence*, "the Text."

As to *the scriptural authority for the use of texts* in preaching, we certainly find some reason for the general principle of employing a portion of Scripture as the ground-

work of discourse, in the Old Testament, as in Nehemiah 8 : 8 ; and also in the New Testament, in our Lord's example in Luke 4 : 16–27, and in the example of the apostles in Acts 13 : 15–44, and Acts 15 : 30, and in other places. The basis of the apostles' preaching was usually some lesson read from the law or the prophets ; and as has been said, "even if Christ and his apostles did not strictly conform themselves to the use of texts, it may be answered that they, in their preaching, furnished the texts for us."

While the general *historical use of texts*, or the founding of the sermon directly upon the word of God, is to be traced back to the earliest ages, the use of the single brief text in the more confined manner of our times, as standing for the particular theme of the discourse, is ascribed to the *Presbyter Musæus* of Marseilles, in the fifth century. It was, however, by no means the uniform custom of preachers in the first centuries, nor even down to the time of the Reformation, to employ specific texts in preaching, although about the time of Luther the custom was quite generally adopted.

As to the *objections* to the use of texts, Vinet himself says (Homiletics, p. 96) that "what gives a Christian character to a sermon is not the use of a text, but the spirit of the preacher." He says also, "The use of isolated texts, joined to the necessity of *never* preaching without a text, has certainly, in its rigor and absoluteness, something false, something servile, which narrows the field, confuses the thought, puts restraint upon the individuality of the preacher."[1] For a perfect defence of the use of texts, he thinks that every text should contain a complete subject, and every subject should find a complete text. As every sermon, he argues, rests upon a thesis, which is an abstract truth complete in itself; then a text, to be what it

[1] Homiletics, chap. iii., p. 81.

should be, should contain a perfect theme; and few texts do this. Vinet, however, on the whole, argues for the use of texts, as a custom sanctified by the practice of the church, and as affording more advantages than disadvantages. But to bring these objections into a more definite form, —

1. *The use of a text prevents the unity of the discourse.* Here the objection rests upon the fact that the sermon is necessarily built upon the rules of classical eloquence — the ancient oration not strictly demanding a text. But this idea of the sermon, even if admissible, was one of later introduction, and did not belong to it originally, and is not essential to it; its essence being simply an address, aiming to bring the word of God to bear effectively upon the minds and hearts of the people. But even if the sermon be a true oration, it may be said that the orators of antiquity had no infallible truth to speak from as a basis; if they had possessed this, they would doubtless have reasoned from it. All writings, to them, were of little or no higher authority than their own thoughts; they had no inspired word of wisdom to draw from. But, as a matter of fact, the practice of speaking from some text, or definite proposition, was frequently the custom of Greek and Roman orators. Demosthenes almost always spoke upon some special summons, or indictment, or carefully-worded motion, introduced into a deliberative assembly, which served him for a text. And this has continued to be the custom in forensic and parliamentary address formed upon classic models; men speak to a point of law, a special motion or resolution, or else their speaking lacks definiteness and unity.

But we argue further that the true use of the text does promote the unity of a sermon. The main truth of the text, however complex the passage may be, should form the directive and unifying law of the sermon. It is not a true sermon which simply presents the exegesis of the text — which merely explains it; but that is a true sermon which develops the text, and which is moulded in all its

parts by one organic principle of life that springs from the inspired word.

2. *That the use of a text hampers the discourse.* The idea is, that a short text cannot afford enough matter for a long discourse; and thus the mind of the speaker must be continually fettered by the narrow requirements of his text; it cannot act with perfect freedom.

One answer to this is, that it is a good thing to compel the speaker to concentrate his thoughts and to restrain himself from rambling discourse. This is not an enfeebling but an enriching process. One goes over less surface, but he sinks deeper. We answer again, that there are few texts which do not contain the substance of more truth and of larger discourse than most men are capable of drawing from them. This objection is founded on the idea that the Scriptures are a book, like a human book, capable of exhaustion. Besides this, the literal and servile following out of a passage is not required. This following out of a text, word by word, and step by step, without an inner grasp of its meaning, is, after all, but a superficial treatment of it; it is what Hagenbach calls "mosaic-preaching," or making small bits of sermons on every member of the text, — arranging these along together, sticking them side by side, — and not one sermon, embracing the truth of the whole of it. The text need exert no tyranny over the free thought of him who has comprehended its spirit, and seized upon its true meaning and scope. His mind is inspired and freed, rather than hampered.

3. *Texts cannot be found which form perfect theses for all subjects important to be discussed in the pulpit.* This is really the main stress of Vinet's objection. We answer that the Bible contains the seeds of all religious truth, or else it is not a sufficient revelation. It may be that the truth is sometimes contained in a concrete form in the Scriptures; but that is better than an abstract form for the preacher, because it is vital and self-inspiring. It may

stand thus as a generic truth that can be analyzed and applied; or as a specific truth, presenting at least one aspect of the subject, which has a root in the general principle, and which thus legitimately opens to the discussion of the whole theme.

All these and other objections will vanish when we regard the minister in his true light, as *an interpreter of the word of God to men.* Whether conformed to classical or unclassical rules, the minister's responsibility is to make known to men the will of God, and this will is contained most perfectly in the Scriptures; and although he may preach the word of God sometimes without taking a text from the Bible, yet so long as he is a minister of the word, he will not find a subject proper to be preached upon, for which he cannot find a legitimate text in the Scriptures.

Let us, on the other hand, look at the true *design and advantages* of the use of texts. They are chiefly fourfold.

1. The use of the text *has the sanction of an ancient and consecrated custom.* It is the way in which the Christian church has been taught the word of God, and the way in which the truth has been preached to men, from the earliest times, and it has therefore accumulated power and solemnity. What possible gain, then, would there be in cutting loose from this ancient custom of founding the instruction of the pulpit upon a definite portion of the word of God, and of delivering a religious essay, or address, from an independent or human point of view?

2. The use of the text *serves to interpret and explain the Scriptures.* This is nearly all the Bible truth that some hearers get in the course of their lives; and this is the way that they learn what is contained in the Bible. A clearer understanding of the Scriptures is thus promoted; and this we look upon as the great advantage of having a definite passage of the word of God to preach upon. The use of the text seems to remind the preacher of his chief responsibility

as a minister of the word. Every text he chooses says to him, "Preach the preaching that I bid thee. Preach not yourself, but Christ Jesus the Lord." And one text often comprehends a whole system of truth, the whole of Christianity — as the entire arch of heaven is said to be reflected in a drop of dew.

3. The use of the text *lends a divine authority to the sermon.* It recognizes the authority of the word of God as the basis of all true preaching, and the truth itself has a converting power. "*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.*" "*Now ye are clean through the word I have spoken unto you.*" "*Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.*" "*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*" "*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*"

The use of the text as the foundation of the sermon leads us to see and feel that it is the authoritative word of God, not the doubtful word of man, which is set forth. This gives the preacher a more than personal authority, and it has also a reflex influence upon the hearer, awakening in him a renewed reverence for God and his word, which perhaps had become dulled. He is put in mind that there is a sure word of prophecy given from heaven to men, an infallible standard of faith and practice, by which at last he shall be judged.

4. The use of the text serves *to introduce and limit the subject of discourse.* It obliges the preacher, or should do so, to have a definite subject of remark, and it affords, too, a better subject than the preacher, even if left to himself, would probably choose for the spiritual instruction of his hearers. And with the whole Bible to select from, the preacher need never be at a loss for subjects; the great trouble is to choose among the multitude of subjects that the word of God pre-

sents. The proper use of texts is thus promotive of *variety* in preaching; for where the mind naturally runs into one track of thinking, the very responsibility laid upon the preacher to give something like a comprehensive view of the word of God, compels him to choose a great variety of themes.

We would now consider *the main principles to guide us in the choice of texts.*

1. *The text should be the word of God.*

"*If any man speak, let him speak according to the oracles of God.*" All preaching should have a biblical truth, "*a word of the Lord*," in it; it should be a real προφητεια, springing from a divine, not human, root. To illustrate this principle more carefully, —

(*a.*) *It should not be drawn from any apocryphal writing.*

(*b.*) *It should not be of doubtful authenticity.* How far texts should be chosen from books of whose canonical authorship, or even authenticity, there is more controversy than of others, — as the books of Daniel, Ecclesiastes, Second of Peter, Hebrews, and Revelation, — all we can say is, that English and American criticism has not yet reached the sublimations of German criticism; for the critical faculty, rather than the faculty of faith, — the faculty of believing as little as possible, — has been developed in Germany during the last half century. The passion for scientific investigation should be subordinated in the preacher to the practical faculty. He should look for the word of God from every source, and in all its multiform modes of communication, rather than be continually striving to diminish and narrow down the field of inspired truth. Every book of the Bible, at least, stands upon its own evidences. The preacher should certainly examine those evidences with care; but no book of Scripture has been left unassailed; even the Gospel of John has been the theme of peculiar hostility. Shall we discontinue to take texts from John's Gospel, because, for-

sooth, this or that German critic has doubted its canonicity? And so of the book of Hebrews, and of Revelation. Christianity does not fall even with these great books. Paul may not, indeed, have written the Epistle to the Hebrews, nor John, the apostle, the Apocalypse; but does this controversy as to their authorship diminish their essential value? and will the controversy be settled in our lives, and while the world stands? Everything that has been assailed is not, for that reason, less true or divine. The proof of the inspiration of these books, both outward and inward, is overwhelmingly great, far greater than the arguments for their non-inspiration; and they remain in the canon, and continue to nourish the faith and piety of the church, as they have done for ages. Let us then continue freely to use these precious portions of the word of God, though there may be peculiar difficulties that remain to be cleared up respecting their human authorship; or, perhaps we should say, instead of "peculiar," *more* difficulties than attend the other books of the Bible.

(c.) *It should not disregard the analogy of faith.* We mean by this the right dividing of the word of God, in relation both to the essential and the relative importance of every portion of Scripture. Thus one should not preach Judaism instead of Christianity, or dwell upon the Old Testament with such continuous intensity as to draw his inspiration from the spirit of the Old, rather than of the New, whose ministers we are. When we preach from the Old Testament, we should surely seek to find the New Testament in it — the testimony of Christ, the analogy of faith. The Old Testament is the New Testament in its germ, and therefore cannot be neglected by the preachers of Christ; but we should choose our texts, and treat them in such a way as that they may all bear upon the "*truth as it is in Jesus;*" and we think, indeed, that a minister of the New Testament should preach most of the time from the New Testament, as being the fuller revelation, the perfect truth. The Old

Testament is more especially the law, and therefore preparative, but the New is more truly the gospel of the grace of God, of his perfect manifestation in his Son; and even in the New Testament itself there are some portions more particularly to be chosen and dwelt upon, as containing more of the truth and riches of Christ.

(*d.*) *It should not be an incorrect translation.* The correct rendering of a text should certainly always be given, even though our English translation of the passage be not entirely literal; for a preacher should establish his people *on the original text*, and educate them up to this idea, though he ought to do this in such a way as not to impair confidence in our own version, which is admitted to contain no essential error or perversion of the truth, but he may, in a proper way, let them understand that the scholarship of the present time is, as would be naturally expected, more advanced than formerly, though great tact and prudence are to be employed in doing this. The continual repetition of the phrases, "or, as it is in the original," "more correctly translated," "more literally rendered," weaken confidence; and rather than introduce these phrases commonly and carelessly, similar texts of correct interpretation, conveying the same truth, should be used in preference.

But the exact rendering of a passage gives it often an unexpected beauty and force; even the right punctuation of a passage adds vastly to its homiletical value.

How immeasurably different is the Roman Catholic reading, "I say unto thee this day, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise," from the true rendering, "I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise"![1] The more literal rendering of ἀναλύσεως, in 2 Tim. 4 : 6, by *loosening*, instead of "departure," brings out an unexpected and beautiful meaning of the old mariner nearly ready to cast off from the world, and sail forth on the sea of eternity. In 2 Pet. 3 : 12,

[1] Bib. Sac., October, 1868.

σπεύδοντας might very well be rendered in the active and more stimulating sense of "looking for and *hastening* the day of God." In Gal. 3 : 24, παιδαγωγὸς should be translated, "the slave who leads the child to the house of the schoolmaster;" so the law leads us to our teacher, Christ, that we may be taught and justified by faith. 1 Cor. 4 : 4, Οὐδὲν ἐμαυτῷ σύνοιδα, instead of meaning, "I know nothing of myself," is, literally, "I am not conscious to myself of any guilt," and yet I am not thereby justified; showing that even the unconsciousness of his sins cannot justify the sinner — an important homiletical and practical sense. Numerous similar passages might be mentioned, and are familiar; yet how pertinaciously some faulty translations have been preached upon! not, perhaps, to the inculcation of error, but certainly without a nice regard to exact truth. The text in Acts 26 : 28, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," has been used to serve as the basis of discourses on "being almost a Christian;" whereas it would seem to have been a poor jest of Agrippa's, to the effect that Paul should be foolish enough to expect that in so short a time, or by so little effort, he, Agrippa, should be made a Christian! If this indeed is the true meaning, it should be followed, although, in this case, it is hard to give up the commonly received rendering; but if it is not the meaning of the text, it should not be so used.

The beautiful passage, so often used, in 1 Cor. 13 : 12, "For now we see through a glass darkly," would be stronger still if rendered literally, "For now we see in a mirror obscurely (enigmatically)." The idea is not that of looking through a glass; but it is the imperfect *reflection* of an object in a steel mirror of the apostle's time, compared with the actual sight of the object itself. This is likened to the reflection of divine truth in these lower works of God, as compared with the future clear beholding of that truth in God himself. The translation of "temptation," instead of "bodily infirmity," in Gal. 4 : 14, exposes the passage to the false and pernicious idea sometimes brought out in preaching

upon it, that the apostle was in the power or continual temptation of some *sinful* habit which had fastened itself upon him, so as to be well nigh irresistible — a totally incorrect meaning, for the "temptation" here is the trial occasioned by some physical disease or weakness.

Biblical hermeneutics is the preacher's life-long study. He should have the principles of interpretation clearly established in his mind, so that they may be constantly applied in practice; for his material for preaching lies in the Bible. The word of God is his field. Mere fragmentary studies of the word of God, therefore, for the purpose of selecting and elucidating individual texts for the material of preaching, are not enough; his noble and difficult office is to be an interpreter of the whole word of God to men. He should explore it thoroughly, its heights and depths, leaving no unknown land. He should make a systematic study of the Bible, following its books connectedly, according to the law of harmonious development, and not being content with the investigation of isolated texts upon a particular theme. Thus Whately says, "Beware of classing texts together in regard to their *subjects* alone, without any regard to the *periods* in which successive steps were made in the Christian revelation — jumbling confusedly Evangelists, Acts, Epistles. This, among other things, makes Socinians, who are right up to a certain point, but stop short in the middle of the gradual revelation; they have the blossom without the fruit. Jesus Christ was first made known as a man sent from God, whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power; then as the promised Christ; then as He in whom 'dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,' in whom 'God was manifest in the flesh,' in whom 'God was manifesting himself unto the world.'"[1]

If the preacher studies the Bible as a whole, then, when he comes to the interpretation of a single text, or passage of

[1] E. Jane Whately's Life of Whately, vol. i., p. 207.

Scripture, he sees its proper relations, limitations, scope, and bearing; and the philological exegesis of an individual text, though the first, is therefore sometimes the least part of the matter. Its real, spiritual interpretation as an harmonious portion of God's word is of higher import; for the Spirit, who inspires the whole, who gives unity to the whole, must breathe new life into the word, and bring back its original power, its divine meaning. It was said of Edward Irving, who, with all his errors, had some grand traits as a preacher, that "the Bible was to him, not the foundation from which his theology was to be substantiated or proved, but a divine word, instinct with meaning and life, never to be exhausted, and from which light and guidance — not vague, but particular — could be brought for every need."[1] These remarks lead us to add, as coming under this general head, another principle in the choice of a text: —

(*e.*) *It should be suggested by the regular study of the Scriptures, rather than by accident.* This we have before remarked upon. The text should rather choose than be chosen; it should spring out of the habitual meditation of the word of God. There should be a certain divine order in the selection of texts, and the mind should, in some true sense, be guided by the Holy Spirit in the selection of proper texts. The text should be the text to *be* preached upon, because the Spirit has brought the mind of the preacher to it — has led his thoughts, studies, and desires up to the open door of the house of God, where food may be received for the nourishment of the souls of pastor and people.

(*f.*) *It should not be a merely human utterance, used as if it were the word of God.* "All that lies between the covers of the Bible is not divine." It is not all a word or speech of God himself, since a large portion of the Bible is the record of human sayings and doings. The record

[1] Mrs. Oliphant's Life of Irving.

may be divinely guided and preserved, while the text itself is but the expression of human imperfection and sin. It may be used as a text in its true connections, as an important fact of human history, as something essentially related to God's government and the redemption of men, but not as an expression of the mind of God. There are texts spoken by angels, men, and devils, by ignorant men, by wicked men and opposers, by the prince of evil himself. These may be usefully employed to illustrate the workings of the wicked heart, and also as forcible indirect arguments; thus if even demoniacs, for example, acknowledge the truth and divine nature of Jesus, how much more should we!

We surely should never employ a text expressing a *wrong* sentiment, as if it were authoritative, simply because it stands in the Bible. The book of *Ecclesiastes* is, on this account, peculiarly difficult to be handled; and a right or wrong theory of this book makes all imaginable difference in the authority of many of its passages — whether they are considered to be truly inspired by the Spirit of God, or are the utterances of the disappointed and corrupt human heart of Solomon, or of some writer of the splendid but morally fallen Solomonic epoch. Many a false doctrinal argument, or perverse opinion, has been bolstered up by texts which, if studied in all their bearings, would lead to precisely opposite conclusions. There are, it is true, texts which are the spontaneous words of men, and which are, nevertheless, inspired by the Holy Spirit; they flow from the teachings of God's law and spirit. Such is the passage in Gen. 32 : 10, where Jacob says, "*I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant.*" Most of the words of Job and of Daniel (though not all) are of the same character; they are "the reflection of the word of God in the spirit of man."[1] These, of course, constitute legitimate texts, as

[1] Hagenbach.

do also those words where the Spirit of God forces the truth, as it were, from irreligious or wicked men, as in the case of Balaam, and of Pilate, and of the Roman centurion at the sepulchre; and the utterances of Job's friends, although condemned by God in the gross, are, in the detail, good.

2. *The text should be fitted for edification.*

In its adaptation to the audience, time, and occasion, it should be suited to the high purposes of sacred instruction.

(*a.*) *It should be plain and perspicuous.* If easily understood, and naturally suggestive of the subject, this helps the common mind to comprehend and remember it; and it also removes the temptation from the preacher to be pedantic and obscure; he is led by it to a solid and earnest style of discourse. But there are exceptions to this choice of plain texts. An obscure text may sometimes be advantageous. Its treatment assists in the interpretation of the Bible to the common mind; and it leads to an expository style of discourse. The very announcement of such a text in itself awakens attention; for men like to see a hard knot untied. It is a great mental refreshment and excitement to the pious mind to obtain a new idea from God's word; and all men love to have mysteries unfolded. But the very obscure and difficult passages, such, for example, as Paul's meaning in Rom. 7: 9–25, or Christ's preaching to "the spirits in prison," or the passage in 2 Pet. 1: 20, 21, or "God's hardening Pharaoh's heart," should not be too frequently taken, nor as a general rule; otherwise a curious, rather than trustful, spirit will be nourished in the congregation.

And as another caution, it is not best to take a difficult passage unless we are sure we can go some way toward clearing up its difficulties, instead of increasing them; thus we should not take such a text when pressed for time, or when we wish to talk in a direct, practical manner. In a word, he who is in earnest to convert the souls of his

people will be most apt to take for texts those plain, important passages which contain saving truth expressed in the most simple and solid form, comprehending in clear propositions the great truths of the gospel — the incarnation, the atonement, faith, love, repentance, the Christian life, the judgment, eternal life.

(*b.*) *It should be dignified, as opposed to what is odd.* In so vast and various a book as the Bible, — a world in itself, — there are passages treating simply and freely of human life, which are to be taken in their right historical connections, and with proper mental preparation; but which, suddenly announced from so solemn a place as the pulpit, would have a startling effect, tending to produce irreverence. The dignity of the text may be violated, (1.) *By a text which expresses no moral or religious idea;* as if one should take the passage concerning the apostle Paul, "Having shorn his head in Cenchrea;" or the words of the Saviour, "Loose the colt, and bring him here." (2.) *By a text which suggests ludicrous associations.* These words have been actually preached upon: Cant. 5 : 3; "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on?" "Moab is my wash-pot." "Ephraim is a cake unturned." (3.) *By a text not adapted to modern or occidental ideas of modesty.*[1] There may be too great a fear on the part of the preacher of offending a sickly fastidiousness, which, by and by, may grow so extravagant that it cannot even bear the truth that our Lord was conceived and born of a woman; or that could not repeat many of his own words drawn from common things. To the pure all things are pure; but, notwithstanding this, it is still true that oriental and occidental ideas of delicacy differ; and many of our words and customs would be highly indelicate to oriental minds. The ideas of different ages also greatly differ in respect to these things, and a due regard should be had to that fact. The soberness of the

[1] Professor Phelps.

text should be observed, in order, if nothing else, to maintain respect and reverence for the word of God. (4.) *By a merely ingenious and wittily-applied text.* An old divine of the time of James I. of England and VI. of Scotland, preached before that unstable monarch upon the words in James 1: 6 — "*Waver not.*" This text was surely apt enough and bold enough to be admissible; but the following use of a passage in Gen. 48: 13, 14 was much too ingenious. Jacob, in his blessing of Manasseh, laid his right hand upon him, crossed over his left; and the theme drawn from this was, "We derive our blessings under the cross." Sometimes, however, there is a piquancy and pertinency in the text which is simply felicitous, and yet not undignified; thus Edward Irving's first sermon in London was upon the text, "*Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for. I ask you, therefore, for what intent you have sent for me.*"

(c.) *It should be fresh.* That is to say, as a general rule, it is well not to take too hackneyed a text; for a fresh text creates interest in the writer's own mind, and in the minds of his hearers; it is turning over a fresh leaf in the Bible; it promotes a broader knowledge of the Scriptures; it is bringing out of the divine treasures "things *new* and old." Some preachers seem to think that they must in no case depart from the use of immemorial texts upon immemorial subjects; whereas other texts, a little out of the common, would throw new light upon the subject. This, however, should not deter one from employing those familiar texts which have the merit of greater appropriateness, and which seem to be peculiarly consecrated to particular themes; such, for example, as some of the words of Christ, which have a peculiar weight and sanction as coming directly from his mouth. "*Ye must be born again*" is and will ever be the great standard text upon the subject of regeneration; and yet there are other fruitful texts upon this fundamental theme. There are, indeed, a few precious, familiar texts

which a minister should most certainly preach upon, and repeatedly preach upon; for, though so familiar, when treated with earnestness they never fail of having a powerful effect; and, like the green earth, or the sun, or the stars, that we see every day, because they *are* so great, so good, so deep, so divine, they are ever fresh.

Searching out *novel* texts is not what is meant by employing fresh texts; for fresh texts are those which, as soon as uttered, suggest original reading and study of the Bible, as if the preacher had gone farther and deeper into the mysteries of the word, and found new and rare words of divine truth. The stereotyped use of certain texts in preaching — setting aside those few familiar texts that stand out like mountains that cannot be hid — may be explained by the fact, that great preachers who have gone before have made certain texts familiar and popular by preaching great sermons upon them, by dwelling upon these passages as their favorites, as their theological proof-texts; and less original minds of their own denominations and theological opinions have concluded that there were no texts in the Bible other than these. How different was a mind like that of Leighton, that found food in every part of the word of God!

(*d.*) *It should be as impersonal as possible.*[1] That is, any marked personality in the text that directs thought to the speaker, or to any particular person or persons among his hearers, is to be avoided; and this has been, oddly enough, illustrated in the history of preaching. Dr. Strong, preaching to a congregation in which there was a controversy raging, took for his text, "*I hear there be contentions among you; I partly believe it;*" and it is related of Wetstein, the distinguished German preacher, that, after having had an annoying dispute with a man named Alexander, he preached upon the text, "*Alexander the coppersmith did me much injury.*" Yet there may be special

[1] Professor Phelps.

occasions — funeral occasions — when a personal text is not only appropriate, but singularly impressive and affecting, as, for instance, a most touching funeral sermon upon the character of an aged deacon noted far and wide for his primitive piety and lively strength of religious character, was preached from the text, "*An old disciple.*"

(*e.*) *It should, as a general rule, be didactic.* That is, it should be a text capable of analysis, of expansion, of thoughtful treatment, in opposition to a highly imaginative, poetical, or impassioned text. Such an impassioned text might be sometimes effective; but it demands a peculiar state of feeling in preacher and audience, and requires an equally fervid introduction and continuously impassioned treatment. It also excites undue expectation in the audience, and strings up a sermon to too high a pitch. A text, therefore, which contains truth in a suggestive form, is better than one which gives full expression to the feeling of the truth suggested; for there is something undeveloped in the first, something that requires an act of reflection to awaken feeling, and it does not start from too high a point, thus aiding in the gradual development of the sermon. It is better to have feeling flow naturally from the actual treatment of a text, than to require it to flow at once on the mere pronouncing of the text. The preacher should not, therefore, acquire the habit of depending upon sensational, or what may be called *ambitious* texts. Yet, in a time when spiritual indifference broods like a death-pall over his congregation, it might be impressive for a minister to pour out his feelings in a vehement, ejaculatory text, which was uttered originally at a similar time of religious apathy and death: "*Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God!*"

Sometimes, also, a brilliant text gives power and glory to a sermon, when it is carried out, as are some of Melville's sermons, in the same striking and exalted strain. Such a text at once raises the audience into a higher sphere, and bears their thoughts beyond this world; but it requires deep

feeling, powerful imagination, and bold thought inspired by bold faith, to treat such texts successfully.

3. *The text should have true relations to the subject.*

The text should be vitally one and the same with the subject.

(*a.*) *It should have pertinency.* This means that there should be an organic, and not a merely mechanical, connection between the text and the sermon; that the sermon should grow from the text like a living plant from its root. The pertinency of the text may be violated, (1.) *When the text does not contain the subject of the sermon.* Thus the text may refer to an entirely different truth, or class of truths, from that treated of in the sermon. 1 Cor. 11 : 34, "*If any man hunger, let him eat at home;*" subject, "Home and Home Piety." Is. 40 : 1, "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people;*" subject, "A comfortable religion not to be sought for by Christians." It is the habit of some preachers to touch the text so lightly, to avoid it so scrupulously, to display one's independence in talking of everything *but* the text, and to look upon this fastidious avoidance of the text as a matter of good taste (as, indeed, it is in essay-writing, where one strives to convey an idea indirectly, and where philosophy, instead of the gospel, is often preached), that Cowper's words are brought to mind: —

> "How oft, when Paul has served us with a text,
> Has Epictetus, Plato, Tully preached!"

(2.) *When the text has not the spirit of the sermon.* Thus the sermon may be imaginative and poetical, when the text is didactic; or it may be logical and argumentative, when the text is emotional and pathetic; whereas the text should give the key-note to the sermon.

(*b.*) *It should have directness.* A direct treatment and application evidently secure more of divine authority, and tend more certainly to edification.

The question arises here, May we employ an *accommo-*

dated text? An accommodated text has been defined as "one which is applied to a subject resembling that in the text, but yet entirely distinct from it."[1] Being thus chosen, not on the principle of identity, but of resemblance or similarity only, an accommodated text, though sometimes allowable, and even necessary, should be very sparingly used, and never from resemblance of mere sound of words, or any fanciful resemblance, but only from a similarity of ideas, or truths. "*Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward*," may be justly applied to Christian sanctification amid difficulties, or to Christian activity in discouraging circumstances.

Such an accommodated text, when it suggests a natural and sensible resemblance of ideas, without anything strained, or frivolous, or fanciful, and is at the same time itself founded upon some deep principle of truth, applied only to different circumstances, is perfectly justifiable. Thus "Christ stilling the storm" is well applied to his peace-giving power in spiritual things, in stilling the storm of the wicked and passionate heart; for outer things may typify inward feelings. "Simon bearing the cross" is a proper type of the Christian bearing the cross after Christ; in fact, the principle of humble obedience is identically the same in both actions. But this typical use of texts may be carried too far; thus Hagenbach mentions a German preacher's drawing from the words of the Saviour on the cross, "*I thirst*," the theme that "Christ thirsted for the salvation of men." It is one thing to take an outward type as obviously suggesting an inward truth, and another thing deliberately to turn the text to a sense entirely different from what it plainly will bear. The *allegorical* use of texts in the past, especially by the older Puritan divines, among them the peerless John Bunyan himself, is an illustration of this. And to what absurdities has it not sometimes led! Thus the two pennies given by

[1] Professor Phelps.

the Good Samaritan have been turned into the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper! A preacher who deals in allegorical preaching, or in such a fanciful torturing of the plain meaning of texts, not only shows weakness, but is apt to lead himself and others into error, mysticism, and obscurity, as did Origen, with all his profound intellect and piety.

Yet the use of this principle of accommodation in texts cannot be entirely given up; for if we give it up, we should lose much that is interesting to the mind in the inward and outward resemblances of truth, and in the matter of actual instruction. Language, for example, which is addressed to the apostles, may, in most instances, be legitimately accommodated to apply to all Christians. But in using accommodated texts, the original significance of the text should not be lost sight of; it should be fairly applied, and it should be always clearly stated in some way, that it *is* an accommodated use.

But to the employment of what is called *motto* texts, we are decidedly opposed. They are used merely as a matter of form, in order that there may be a text to stand at the head of the sermon; but they have no further shaping influence on the subject, or on the mode of treating it. That is using the word of God unworthily, and the "text" becomes a "pretext."

(*c.*) *It should have correctness.* That is, it should be employed according to the truth, — according to the true intention of the author, be he God or man; and it should be applied to a subject which is the true one taught by it, and not to any other subject. We do not refer now altogether to the correctness of the verbal interpretation of the text, to which reference has been made; but more to the substance of the text itself, since truth is better than falsehood, and even truth cannot be helped by untrue arguments; and if certain texts have been used from time immemorial as proof-texts of any particular subject, which are not so in fact, it is, on a broader view of truth, right to dis-

use them for such a purpose, and to give them their true meaning; for it is not the number of proof-texts that establishes a truth, but the clearness and authority of one text; and if many texts may be used by way of illustration, they should not be employed as proof, and much less as containing the true substance of a particular doctrine or subject. This opens an interesting field of discussion in regard to the external and internal sense of Scripture and the just limitations of biblical truth; which questions, however, belong more properly to the department of Interpretation, and we cannot here discuss them.

The simple principle now before us is, that the text should be correctly employed in its relation to the subject; that the real contents of the subject should be found in it, though it may be in the simplest synthetical form; it should not be wrested from its true meaning, force, and relations; and thus an honest and careful study of the *context* is essential. One can often arrive at the truth of a text only from a study of the whole passage, or chapter, or even book, in which it is contained, and the practice of using individual texts, without consulting them in the original, is always to be deprecated. A text should never be taken merely from memory, without carefully consulting the passage in the original Hebrew or Greek.

The principle is sometimes laid down that a text should be interpreted to mean all that it can possibly be made to mean, without regard to the limitations of the context; but preachers, we think, will hereafter be called to a stricter account in their use of texts; they will be required to be more candid and true, and their preaching will gain proportionally in point and power. "*Bonus textuarius est bonus theologus.*"

(*d.*) *It should have fruitfulness.* The Bible is full of germinal texts capable of almost infinite development; and yet every word and sentence in the Bible which *seem* to convey such fruitful ideas, do not always do so. Preachers

are sometimes apt to be caught by the appearance of a passage, rather than by the substance of truth which it contains; for a text often appears very suggestive; it seems to open a most fruitful subject of thought; whereas it may be but an incidental or accidental expression, and by no means the best and fullest manifestation of the truth. Vinet (Homiletics, p. 137) thus describes a fruitful text: "I call a text fruitful which, without foreign additions, without the aid of minute details, without discussion, furnishes, when reduced to its just meaning, matter for a development interesting in all its parts, and which leaves with us an important result."

We close this topic with a few practical suggestions.

1. *The text should have unity in itself.* It is not best, as a rule, to employ two or more texts from different parts of the Bible; it is better to have but one text, one passage of Scripture, and that, whether long or short, should contain one subject, and be complete in itself.

The advice is commonly given that the text should be short, for a short text is better remembered. Brief, condensed, penetrating texts stick in the memory like nails fastened by the masters of assemblies. And yet texts may be too brief; they may not contain a complete subject; they may be mere fragments of a truth or of a sentence. The better rule is, that the text should contain one complete truth or idea, and then it may be very brief. What a world of meaning is in that shortest text of the Bible, "*Jesus wept*"!

It is wholly unjustifiable to take a mere portion or clause of a verse, even if it contains good sense in itself, but which, by thus dismembering it from the rest, does not give the real or full sense intended to be conveyed by the whole verse—such a text, for instance, as Heb. 4: 2, "*But the word preached did not profit them;*" without adding the very important clause, "*not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*" The longer the passage, however, that

we may conveniently employ for a text, without violating the law of unity, the more of the actual body of Scripture we bring before the people, and the nearer do we come, undoubtedly, to the primitive style of preaching.

2. *The text should be chosen before the subject.* There can be no doubt of this, as a general rule; for this seems to honor the word of God — that the subject should spring from it, rather than that it should be fitted to the subject. This rule is continually violated by those who preach altogether topically. Dr. Emmons even recommended the choosing of a subject before a text; and there may be exceptional cases; as, for instance, when a subject which has possessed the mind has sprung up without connection with any particular text; yet, when an appropriate text is found for such a subject, it will often receive new light and richness from the discussion of the text itself.

3. *The text should be announced first of all.* It is the European custom to preface the text with some remarks, sometimes with a little sermon, on the general subject of praise, or on the necessity of God's blessing the word: our custom of announcing the text first is, however, we think, the best.

4. *The text should be pronounced clearly, with some simple prefatory remark, introducing it easily.* All things should be in readiness, so that there may be no hastiness or business-like air at the commencement of the discourse. Even as the pulpit itself should be entered with simple dignity and seriousness, so the opening services should be simple, modest, serious, yet without dulness or gloomy gravity. There should be no act or gesture that draws the attention of the audience to the speaker; but the thought of God and the word of God should be the first impression.

It is well to mention distinctly the chapter and verse before the words of the text; for the habit of consulting the Bible, and following the preacher in the Bible, on the part of the

congregation, is certainly one to be encouraged. If the text is a brief one, it is well to read it twice; if a longer one, it may be repeated in some way in the introduction: at all events, the audience should hear and understand distinctly what the text is, or the effect of the whole discourse is greatly impaired, perhaps lost. The text should be read in a slow and clear voice, but not loud, and perhaps a little more emphatically the second time than the first.

§ 12. *The Introduction.*

The introduction to a discourse is naturally compared to the door, or vestibule, of a house: it opens to what the house contains. The comparison might be carried still further; for since the door of the house should accord with the style and character of the house itself, and one would not put a Grecian portico on a Gothic house, so the introduction should harmonize with the subject of the discourse, and not strike the mind with incongruity; and as the door ought not to be too large for the house, neither should the introduction be so for the sermon. Neither should the doorway be mean and narrow, nor the introduction fail of an air of freedom and simple elegance; and as the door is generally placed in the centre of the building, in like manner the introduction strikes the central thought and purpose of the sermon.

In the matter of the introduction, it is well to study the *best models*, not only of the introductions of orations and sermons, but of all true literary works; for every work addressed to the human mind must have an intelligent and fit beginning, which suggests its object and denotes its leading idea. The brief but impressive introductions of all the books of the Bible show that their authors, writing under the impulse of inspiration, did not disdain this rational method of making their objects known, and of interesting those whom they addressed. The short introductions of

the "Iliad," the "Æneid," the "Paradise Lost," the "Divina Commedia" of Dante, the "Faerie Queene," and the "Jerusalem Delivered," short as they are, may have cost their authors more labor than any other part of their poems, and may have been the last finished; for they gathered up all the rays of light into one beam, they smote the human mind with a new thought and theme.

Although it is well for a preacher to study good models of introductions in the works of great writers, and especially in the orations and discourses of the best orators, it is better to take the best preachers for our models.

Dr. South's introductions are characteristic, and may be described by the word *commanding;* for they immediately arrest attention, and strike the key-note of the sermon with a ringing blow, as much as to say, "Listen, ye people, to what I have to say on this subject, for I have that to say which is important." There is no frippery, or fancy, or fine writing, but a plain common sense, which appeals at once to the masculine understanding, and leads the hearer to say, "At all events, here is a *man* who has begun to speak; he is worth listening to, even if I cannot agree with him." South's introductions are not so long as to lead the mind away from the object set before him, or from the work laid out in the text itself — which he explains and develops with great care.

Dr. Emmons's introductions are also, in some respects, models of excellence, and possess the same characteristics of common sense, and the union of strong thought with simple expression. They are judicious introductions; they seem perfectly pertinent to the subject, while at the same time they are sagacious, and they awaken curiosity. They are like a Doric porch — very plain and unornamented, but with a certain pleasing, attractive majesty.

Saurin's introductions are particularly happy, and sometimes they are exceedingly bold and striking. They make it difficult to carry on and out the first impressions produced,

and which it would not be well for any less brilliant and vigorous preacher to imitate.

Of contemporaneous and younger preachers, the sermons of *F. W. Robertson* deserve to be studied for their artistic excellence. Some of his introductions consist of but six or seven lines; others seem to lead on imperceptibly, without indicating where they leave off, into the heart of the sermon; but in all of them, while there is no display, there is, at the outset, a fresh turn given to the subject, a new and awakening train of thought started. Robertson's introductions give the idea of a steel forceps seizing upon an object with tenacious grasp, and holding it up with perfect ease and power, turning it round, and looking it through, and then thrusting it into the glowing fire of thought, and welding it with the hammer of an earnest purpose: his introduction seems to say, "I have thought this subject through; I have gone to the heart of it; I intend to treat it in my own way, and out of my own head;" and then the preacher proceeds to lay the subject open, with the same free and confident power. There is no parading of theological or philological pedantry; he is evidently not talking to scholars or philosophers, but he is talking to men — to thinking and feeling men. Perhaps the epithet which would best characterize his introductions is, *manly;* just like the greeting of one genuine man to another, with no servility and no concealment, and yet with a certain thoughtfulness and art. The introduction to the sermon on "Caiaphas' View of a Vicarious Atonement" (First Series, p. 164), is a masterpiece of elaborate and subtile thought, as preparing the way for a remarkable and original view of the atonement; but generally he begins with a simple, strong, and interesting train of thought, without a shade of learned affectation, or even of mock rhetoric; as, for instance, in the sermon on "Worldliness" (Second Series, p. 173), from the text 1 John 11 : 15–17. This introduction, while it is simple and easy to comprehend, yet contains

an extremely interesting and profound question, to the solution of which the mind of the hearer is excited and pushed on. The somewhat extended introduction to the sermon on "Realizing the Second Advent" (First Series, p. 180) is a fine example of the plain, strong, unpedantic, and yet fresh and original way in which this preacher takes up a theme; it is the highest art of a highly-cultured and philosophic mind, determined to be simple, determined to be true and practical, and to be understood by all.

Robertson's introductions are, in fact, unconscious exhibitions of the man himself, of his earnest, penetrating, and, as it were, military mind, that surveys the field at a glance, and at once seizes upon the most advantageous positions to bring his forces into action. He stands before us at the instant he begins to speak, an able and sincere teacher, who must be attended to; he wins, in his very introduction, our respect for himself, if not our convictions of the truth of what he says; and the hearer wishes to hear such a man through, which is a great point gained. That is, perhaps, the great end of the introduction, which should excite a strong and healthy feeling of expectation for what is to follow it.

What is an introduction? (Lat. *exordium*, Gr. *proem.*) To speak in general terms, *it is something which conducts to the real subject, but which is not the real subject.* It is not, strictly speaking, the beginning of the discourse, but it leads to the beginning. It does not even include all that is preliminary to the proposition in the way of actual explanation or clearing up of difficulties; but it has regard rather to the state of mind of the audience and of the speaker, putting the speaker in correspondence with the audience.

We would, therefore, more fully define a true introduction to be, *all that precedes the real discussion of the*

subject, and which is fitted to secure the favorable attention of the hearer to the speaker and to his theme.

Quintilian says, "An exordium is designed to make the hearer think favorably of what the speaker is about to say." Schott's definition is, "All that part of a sermon which is intended to prepare the hearers for the body of the sermon, by bringing them into the same circle of ideas and sympathy of feeling of the speaker." Vinet says (Homiletics, p. 300), "The exordium should be drawn from an idea in immediate contact with the subject, without forming a part of it. It should be an idea between which and that of the discourse there is no place for another idea, so that the first step we take out of that idea, transports us into our subject."

As to the *necessity* of an introduction, although there may be cases where an introduction is not necessary, — where the subject, for instance, is a very familiar one, or where the audience is entirely prepared to hear it discussed, — yet the necessity of some introduction to an important discourse, is founded in nature and in the very laws of the mind.

Nature has few sudden movements; the ocean shelves off gradually, and one season imperceptibly introduces another; a thunder-storm which rends the heavens is preceded by a period of impressive silence and warning; a battle is usually begun by skirmishing and tentative operations; a legislative assembly does not enter upon important business at the first moment of its session, but the way is gradually cleared for more serious questions. The human mind, which, in its healthy state, has a sense of dignity and self-respect, does not like to be hurried, or compelled to move by another's impulse rather than by its own voluntary act; it will not be pushed, but may be drawn.

What, let us ask, *are some of the objects to be gained by a good introduction?*

1. *To remove actual prejudices against the speaker.*

The preacher may have created an unfavorable impression by his course of action in some particular; he may have aroused the jealousies or antagonism of a certain class in his audience — the fashionable class, or the conservative class, or the radical class, or whatever it may be. He may possibly have certain traits of character, which, he is conscious, place him in an unfavorable light with his hearers, especially in regard to his introduction of particular subjects; he may have excited suspicions of his orthodoxy, or, at least, of his sincere belief in some portions of the Christian faith; and yet, although *he* is weak, imperfect, and inconsistent, the truth must be preached, the instruction must be given to the people: in the introduction, then, he is to feel his way through these subtile, popular prejudices, and dispel them, if they are unjust, without, perhaps, seeming to do so. It is not often by direct allusions to himself that he can do this, but rather by indirect suggestions of the intrinsic importance of the theme, of the imperfection of preachers and of men, and of the perfection of truth.

2. *To create a favorable regard for the speaker.*

He may be a young man, a comparative stranger; he may have an abstruse, or what may be called even an ambitious theme; he should begin modestly; — the old Jewish Rabbis used to say that "the creation was made from night to morning, not from morning to night;"[1] — he should avoid making too great promises of what he intends to do; he should show an honest interest in the good of his hearers, without saying too much about it — above all things avoiding flattery; he should endeavor, in a simple, manly way, to bring himself into sympathy with his audience, and to gain their good will and willing hearing; and to *be* modest, to be in earnest, is the best way to effect this.

3. *To create a favorable regard for the subject.*

[1] Bautain.

The preacher is to turn the current of religious feeling, already set flowing, perhaps, by the previous devotional exercises, into the contemplation of some definite religious truth or duty, into some positive and particular direction. In order to secure this end of a favorable regard toward his subject, (*a.*) He may state the *intellectual advantages* to be derived from discussing such a theme. The subject may be the doctrine of moral evil, or that of divine sovereignty; it may be stated at the beginning, that these are the greatest problems of the human mind, meeting the philosopher as well as the theologian; that they have called forth the strength of the best intellects of the race; that no problems are more difficult, and therefore none more deserving of the attention of thinking minds. (*b.*) He may state *the connections of the subject* with other more practical spiritual truths. He may remove the prejudice that the doctrine has no immediate practical bearing or utility, even as depravity, for instance, or the doctrine of sin, lies, in one sense, at the base of the whole Christian system of the atonement, regeneration, holiness, and the Christian life. (*c.*) He may make some *historical allusion* naturally connected with the theme, which always forms an attractive introduction. (*d.*) He may make it appear, at the very beginning, that the subject *bears upon the welfare* of all his hearers; but one should be careful not to use too hackneyed phrases about the greatness and importance of the subject in hand, and should shun stereotyped introductions like the "*constat inter omnes*" of the old scholastic preachers. The classic orators, it is true, had introductions prepared beforehand, which they could fit to any subject; Cicero recommends this; but times have changed, and the duty of the preacher, above all, requires simple earnestness and truth in all parts of the discourse. He should so treat his subject from the start, that his hearers will be impressed with the importance of it, without any formal stereotyped asseveration of its importance. (*e.*) He may make *general and*

modifying suggestions in the introduction; for this is just the place for these *incidental* remarks, which cannot have a a proper place anywhere else. The preacher, looking forward, wishes to give a certain turn to the discourse, or to draw forth a new idea or lesson from the text. In the introduction he may skilfully prepare the way for this; he may make the groove, which he will widen and deepen for the sermon to run in. In the introduction, also, he may set aside, in a few words, any *false impressions* which a certain text, or the foreshadowing of a certain subject, may awaken: here, in a word, he is still free; he has not yet bound himself to any particular line of thought, and he has the advantage of the fresh state of mind of his audience, and of the natural curiosity which is awaked at the first words of a discourse, to see what it may be, and what may be the metal of the speaker.

The *qualities of a good introduction* may be resolved chiefly into four — *Simplicity*, *Modesty*, *Fitness*, and *Suggestiveness*.

1. *Simplicity*. The first five moments, or perhaps three, of a discourse, are often the critical moments, and success or defeat is sometimes contained in them; for, one may see that to begin a sermon in a stilted or highly artificial manner, is to insure its condemnation; but as a ship glides out of port when she is fully ready, with a steady and graceful motion, so a sermon should begin without display, but with a full and firm consciousness of power to reach the end in view.

This simplicity in the introduction may be violated, (*a.*) By too great *abstruseness*. There may be an interesting thought in the introduction, but it should not be so difficult and deep as at once to discourage attention: it should be natural, rather than abstruse.. (*b.*) By too *earnest argument*. One should not plunge at once into argument, but he should trim his sails and enter more cautiously upon the

open, agitated sea of discussion. (*c.*) By too *impassioned and imaginative language.* It is not well to be brilliant immediately, and prose is always better than poetry to start with. One may sometimes use a strong and homely figure to begin with, but generally anything like figurative language is in bad taste, until the mind is warmed up to it, and it glances off "like sparks from a working engine."

Appeals to feeling are generally altogether out of place in the introduction; for what begins in excited feeling may end either in frenzy or in the depths of bathos. Bold flights of fancy and startling language at first, produce dulness at last. Cicero recommends an ornate introduction, in order to raise and embellish the character of what succeeds; but that is doubtful advice for the preacher and for the present age. The simplicity of the introduction, however, should be rather in the expression than in the thought; for it is a great blunder to begin a sermon with a trite truism, as, "The young may die, and the old must," and a very commonplace beginning generally kills the sermon, and is not simplicity. (*d.*) By *indirectness* of thought or style. All elaborate and circuitous language in the introduction, ingenious sentences and painfully wrought antitheses, are out of place, for, generally, a straight, manly marching up to a subject is best, as Dr. Barrow said, that "a straight line is the shortest, both in geometry and morals;" and to begin too far off may lead the hearer's mind to such a distance from the subject, that it cannot be brought back again; but a simple directness, on the other hand, wins the confidence of the hearer. To conceal the subject of the sermon, and to spring it by surprise on the audience, appeals, after all, to an inferior motive, and seems to have something of the nature of "clap-trap" in it. The interest should come from the subject, and from one's power and earnestness in treating it: this is the beauty of Robertson's introductions, upon which we have commented; they combine both originality and clearness of thought. (*e.*) By

being too *long*. An introduction, almost without exception, should be brief; for divine truth does not lie in such unfortunate and obscure circumstances that it needs protracted effort to bring it to light, or to introduce it to the human mind. Augustine's introductions are thus generally brief, simple, and beautiful. Theremin is particularly opposed to long introductions; he says, "Time spent in merely paving the way for the idea [of the discourse] might better be employed in the development of the idea itself." He recommends the immediate connection of the idea with some one of those plain moral or religious ideas which all understand and approve, namely, truth, happiness, or duty, and which can be done without circumlocution. No introduction is better than one too long and wearisome. Interest in the main subject is wasted, and cannot be easily revived. It is the experience of preachers, which is itself suggestive, that as one grows older he is more inclined to cut off several pages of the introductions of his earlier written sermons.

2. *Modesty*. Self-conceit in the introduction is fatal; and true modesty is ever the most effectual way of gaining the good will of an audience.

Allusions to one's self should be rare, and, if made, should be made with genuine delicacy; for any want of respect in the speaker's manner toward the audience is revenged often by their indignation and contempt. Too lofty a style, to begin with, offends modesty as well as simplicity; any exhibition of a sense of superior learning, wisdom, or thought is unfortunate; and no modest man, even though he assume the office of teacher, will have such a feeling.

In Hobbes's "Brief to the Art of Rhetoric," he says, "That the hearer may be favorable to the speaker, two things are required: that he love him or he pity him." Now, no one can love or pity a conceited man; and yet modesty is not to sink into feebleness or self-humiliation, though the ancient orators recommend even timidity in the introduction, in

order to win sympathy; but this, of course, could not be recommended to a Christian preacher; "*for God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of a sound mind.*" Still, one who rises to speak on the great themes of the gospel, with a due sense of the responsibility of souls committed to his charge and guidance, may have a reasonable fear of not being equal to the greatness of the occasion.

3. *Fitness.* By this is meant that the introduction should be in keeping and harmony with the sermon; it should spring from a thorough knowledge of the definite aim one has in view in the sermon.

The introduction should have a proportionate and symmetrical relation, also, to the theme; it should not be invested with independent proportions, as if it were a subject of its own, nor should it have the infelicity to forestall the argument or the important thoughts of the sermon, so that the interest should be all taken up in the introduction; it should be confined to its own place and work.

4. *Suggestiveness.* The fruitful, suggestive, and original character of Robertson's introductions has been dwelt upon; in them the attention of the audience is immediately fastened upon a fresh train of thought, though simply expressed; the door is thrown open to something new and powerfully attractive; the mind is delighted with the prospect of obtaining new ideas on familiar but eternal truth, and of being led into a fresh field of instruction; in a word, he succeeds in arousing *interest*, which is the great thing to be aimed at in an introduction.

Of course the temptation here is to false originality, and to the saying of striking things; and some preachers have a quaint and pungent way of beginning a sermon, which fastens attention, and yet borders somewhat too closely on wit; and it is very easy for a witty minister to be too witty. He should endeavor to make his wit a diffused element of life in the discourse, rather than to condense it into a

sentence which strikes too smartly upon the sense of the ridiculous; and even that which is profoundly original may be simply and naturally expressed. One may, indeed, notice in some of our best New England preachers, past and present, that the first sentence of their discourse is often a very weighty one, — a sentence of true philosophical profundity, — though it is so well thought through that it is expressed in a plain and simple way. The first sentence is thus often the germ of the sermon; and it is sometimes recommended that the first sentence of a sermon should be one that sets people to thinking; but this profoundness of thought at starting is a hazardous thing, and unless well done, it is a signal failure; unless the thought *is* truly profound, and at the same time put in a plain and practical form, it either confuses or disgusts an audience, so that simple good sense in the first sentence is, generally speaking, the safer course.

The following may be given as one example of a beautiful and suggestive introduction from the old French preacher, Michel le Faucheur: "Rom. 8 : 27, '*Nous savons que toutes choses aident ensemble en bien à ceux qui aiment Dieu.*'

"Notre texte contient fort peu de paroles, mais dont le sens est merveilleusement fécond. . . . . Tout ainsi que quand Dieu, à la prière d'Elie, voulut ouvrir le ciel, comme à sa prière il l'avait fermé, la nuée que ce prophète vit montrer de la mer, en exécution de cette volonté favorable de Dieu, n'était pas plus grande que la paume de la main d'un homme, mais cependant en moins de rien elle couvrit le ciel de nuées et toute la terre de pluie, de même cette sentence, quoique fort briève, si vous la méditer attentivement, en moins d'une heure vous fera voir, par manière, tout le ciel rempli des merveilles de la providence de Dieu en la direction et en la conservation de tous ceux qui l'aiment, et vos âmes seront arrosées de toutes parts des consolations de sa grace." [1]

[1] Vinet's Histoire de la Prédication, &c., p. 107.

The *Sources of Introduction*, though they may be almost endlessly varied, may yet all be classified or brought under four principal heads: —

1. *The circumstances of the text.* The time, place, and occasion of the text may be given and described; as the scenic surroundings of Paul preaching on the Areopagus, or the description of Athens, of Corinth, of Ephesus, of Rome, as forming attractive prefaces to many a text of the Acts and the Epistles. The historical period and the exact historical circumstances of the text, and also its local and philological relations, are always admissible: indeed, Theremin lays down the rule that the introduction, in some way or shape, should invariably be drawn from the context — certainly too rigid a requisition.

2. *The relations and circumstances of the subject.* These are explanatory observations, prefatory and general remarks; or, it may be, a single word in the text taken and remarked upon for a moment; and thus the way is prepared for the main subject; e. g., "*Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*" Here one may begin to remark upon the single word "holiness," upon its true evangelical import, and thus lead on gradually to the subject which shall comprehend the whole text, of which "holiness" forms the essence.

3. *General truth, or truths preparatory to the subject.* This method of generalizing to begin with may, indeed, be carried to excess, and may lead the mind away from the definite subject in hand; and it is therefore better to begin as nearly as possible to the thing itself, and not to indulge in introductory platitudes, as is often done in the introductions of Blair. It is well to take some specific truth or fact leading up to the subject, some fit comparison or similitude, some historical fact or proverb, or some striking quotation; and sometimes an imaginary case may be supposed; as Massillon's commencing one of his sermons with the idea of a trial or court scene going on.

4. *Situation of speaker and audience.* This requires

great tact, of which Cicero's "*Pro Milone*" and "*In Catilinam*" are fine examples.

Topics of introductions should be taken generally from *things* rather than persons, though historical examples, even if they are taken from secular history, are sometimes fitted to arouse attention, and they form happy introductions.

A series of good hints as to the sources of exordiums, or introductions, is given in Vinet's Homiletics, p. 302.

Introductions are sometimes called "the crosses of preachers," because beginnings are always difficult; but no introduction is better than a bad one; and sometimes it is best to plunge at once into deep waters.

As to the time of *writing the introduction*, every one is his own best judge: perhaps it should not be the first or the last thing written; but it should be done when the mind is fully possessed of the subject, and when one cannot help saying just what he does, in order to lay the theme fitly before the audience. "As the introduction is only a subsidiary and a preparatory part of a discourse, the topics which it must embrace, and the form in which it should appear, cannot be fully known until the nature and form of the proposition and of the discussion are well ascertained by the speaker. Hence the proper time for the invention and composition of the introduction is *after the subject has been thoroughly studied*, and the general form of the discussion well settled in the mind."[1] This is also Quintilian's advice,[2] who is especially full and excellent on the subject of the "exordium," proving that little can be added to what the ancients have said upon oratory. Vinet says, "There is always an exordium which is better than any other, and it is that on which the true orator ordinarily falls;" therefore it is well for the preacher to have before his mind, or to set before his mind, precisely what end he has in view, and

[1] Day's Rhetoric, p. 48. [2] Instit., B. III., c. 9, s. 8.

what he is conscious he is able to do to attain that end; and this will guide him to say the right thing to begin with, for the introduction should ever have an eye to the conclusion.

§ 13. *The Explanation.*

The explanation of a sermon comprehends *all that is required for the purpose of elucidating the meaning and force of the text, and of thus obtaining from it the true subject of the discourse.* It refers exclusively to the text.

Vinet says that "the explanation is purely definition, and not judgment." It is the defining of the actual terms and contents of the text, so that its true theme may be distinctly presented to the mind. It not only embraces the etymological definition of the text, or that of its verbal terms, but, above all, its rational definition, or that of its complete object of thought; it is, in fact, bringing out in its wholeness the full and entire meaning which the text is intended to convey.

An "expository" sermon may be said to be *wholly* taken up with the explanation; but in every ordinary sermon, with few exceptions, the explanation has its distinct place, and is applied to the precise matter of defining the text, so that its true subject may be presented. It does nothing more than this; it may suggest, but it does not formally state the subject; it leads the way to the proposition and argument, but it is clearly distinguished from them.

A sermon, according to Vinet, really consists of but two parts — the explanation and the proof; but we prefer to limit the use of the explanation to the simple object of defining what the text means.

As to the *extent* of the explanation, it includes both the facts and the sentiments of the text, or, in other words, the *narrative* and the *exposition.*

1. The *Narrative*. This is the investigation and setting forth of the more purely *objective* truth of the passage in its relations to time, place, and circumstance. It is viewing the text in the concrete. It is the consideration of the *why*, *how*, and *what* of the passage, especially in relation to the time in which it originated. Great skill may be used here in accurately developing, in their order of time, all the important and perhaps hidden *facts* involved in the text; in taking it apart, and showing the true order and harmonious relations of the parts to one another and to the whole. Where the text is a very easy and familiar one, all the explanation that is needed may be included in a few words of the introduction; but, generally speaking, some discussion is required to set forth the facts of the text clearly and distinctly, even without developing any new truth from it, or proving anything in particular by it. A lawyer usually makes the explanatory narrative the most important and telling part of his address or plea; he shows his consummate skill in collating facts, in explaining circumstances and events, so as to bear upon any particular point or principle that he desires to establish; thus Cicero's oration for Milo has its chief strength in the exquisite skill of the narrative.

This is also the place for description, especially *historical description*, although that refers, strictly, to place rather than to time. Geographical, historical, and pictorial descriptions in a sermon should be brief, truthful, and vivid, and not highly wrought or poetical. The imagination may be indulged, but it should be remembered that a sermon is prose, not poetry. When the materials for description are ample, they should not be so largely drawn upon as to make it apparent that the sermon was written in order to give the preacher an opportunity to discuss the topography of Jerusalem or Athens, or to paint a glowing picture of a sacred scene, in order to display his fancy and learning; but, at the same time, everything which tends to vivify divine

truth, and draw attention to it, and make it fresh and forcible, is perfectly justifiable. Whately says, "Let not your sermons be avowedly hortatory, nor begin with exhortation; let your apparent object be explanation. Ignorance is not the greatest, but it is the first evil to be removed; it is also the one most in your power to remove, and it is one which people will not be, in the outset, so much disgusted to be told of. And do not think anything irrelevant, however remote it may seem from Christian practice, that tends to interest them in Scripture studies and religious topics."[1]

2. The *Exposition*. This is, by all means, the principal part of the explanation. It regards the text in the abstract rather than in the concrete; and it is more strictly the *definition* of the precise terms and contents of the text. It does not concern itself *about* the text, so much as it does *with* the very words and substance of the text. It comprehends, first of all, a correct *verbal* definition of the passage, a literal explanation of the terms of the text—simple, it may be, in its results, yet one that demands thorough study and scholarship; and, in addition to this, and above all, it includes an honest effort to arrive at the internal meaning of the passage. It is viewing the text *subjectively*. It is looking at it, or rather into it, as taken out of its relations to time, place, and circumstance. It is endeavoring to come at the absolute truth, or the general principle involved in the text. It is, perhaps, as near as anything, what we mean by the expression, "the true spirit of the text." This is the most important idea of the text, because the outward facts and circumstances of the text are comprehended in this inner meaning. This definition of the idea contained in an important passage of divine truth is often the most difficult and taxing part of the whole sermon; for nothing is more difficult than definition, especially the definition of

[1] Life of Richard Whately, vol. i., p. 210. Letters to a Young Clergyman.

ideas. It is the complete separation of the idea from all other ideas and objects of thought. It is looking at it as a whole, so that the proposition follows this mastery of the true idea, or the essential meaning of the text, as a matter of course.

There may exist doubt as to the true meaning of a text, and several meanings may be claimed by the best scholars and thinkers; here patient and honest thought is required. There may be, also, wholly different ideas, and classes of ideas, drawn from the same passage; and there may be, further still, various shades of ideas comprehended in it: in the explanation, therefore, it is necessary not only to get at the best exposition of the true principle contained in the text, but to have *a clear and independent idea of our own* concerning it; to come ourselves to a distinct and original conception of the truth taught in the text. This view should be clearly defined, and should be the result of accurate investigation with all the helps of scholarship; and then what follows in the other portions of the sermon will have good foundations to rest upon.

There are some classes of texts which *particularly demand explanation.* Almost every text, being in a dead language, requires some brief explanation; but those which absolutely demand it may be chiefly divided into three classes: —

(1.) *Typical and figurative texts.* These all contain some true meaning, and that true meaning, or literal truth conveyed by them, is to be set forth; e. g., Ps. 84: 11, "*For the Lord is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*" Here are two distinct ideas of the nature of God metaphorically inwoven (it would seem) through the whole verse. God is not only a *sun* — the source of light and truth — but a *shield* — the source of strength, protection, daily providential oversight; he is the giver

both of glory and grace; he is so as regards the whole of our life, external and internal. (2.) *Texts whose sense is complicated*, and open to controversy. (3.) *Texts of deep and pregnant meaning*, not at once obvious, but connected, it may be, with some previous truth, argument, or fact. Especially under this head are to be classed texts of profound spiritual meaning.

The *materials* or *sources of the explanation* are manifold.

1. *Philological analysis.* This embraces a close and accurate verbal exegesis of the passage, and the different modes of stating and explaining the text, or the different views which may be and have been taken of it, as well as the refutation of false modes of interpreting the text — those, perchance, which are in common use. One may thus judiciously present the more correct translation of a text; e. g., Rom. 12 : 1, "*That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service*," — *την λογικην λατρειαν*, — the literal meaning of *λογικην* here, as in particular passages in John 4 : 23, Rom. 7 : 25, 1 Pet. 3 : 2, is "*spiritual*" — "pertaining to the spiritual, or the soul's life;" or the passage in Philipp. 3 : 20, — "*Our conversation is in heaven*," where the word *πολιτευμα*, rendered "conversation," is, strictly and nobly, "*citizenship*." The drawing out and binding together of a complicated parable, like that of the unjust steward, which requires the strict defining of terms and their connections, as well as the elucidation of the meaning of the whole, and the explanation of such a weighty, profound passage as 1 Tim. 3 : 16, are familiar examples of the absolute need of accurate, scholarly analysis. In fine, the critical scholarship and pure learning required in the sermon thus generally come in the explanation; there they find a true place, though even there they should not be obtruded, and should manifest results rather than processes.

2. *Examination of the relative position of the text*, or

the study of what is called the "context." The detaching of texts from their context has been a source of mischief in preaching as great as, at the beginning of the recent war, the too great separation of our smaller military divisions from the main body, was to the success of our arms.

3. *Comparison with parallel passages and with the main scope of Scripture.* This fills up cavities, enriches the meaning, clears obscurities, and modifies and defines the limits of the truth taught by the particular passage.

4. *Development of historical facts.* The preacher ought not to presume too much on the intelligence of his congregation in this respect—that they are all well informed even on the most familiar historical points; but he should bring to bear the animating influence of his own richer and wider historical knowledge. This is a great source of interest. The most minute historical allusion often throws sudden light upon the text. John 7: 37, "*In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.*" This was uttered upon the very day on which the priests employed the symbol of pure water in the temple, and in many ways made this water-symbolism strikingly prominent. As another instance, Matthew, who relates to us Christ's gracious words addressed to publicans and sinners, was himself by profession a publican. Such an historical fact as the military Roman law which compelled the use of any man or beast along the road, illustrates the sentence, "*If any man compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*" The closing of the gate in all oriental cities, even to this day, at an early hour in the evening, gives force to the Saviour's words, "*Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able.*"

5. *Scientific illustrations.* The preacher should lay his hand on these boldly; and he may thus, in an eminently scientific age like the present, win new interest for religious truth, which is unscientific and undefined. What is called

the modern science of "Egyptology," founded upon the inductive process, has totally destroyed the triumph of false science in regard to biblical antiquities, so destructive of the authenticity of the Scriptures. In like manner geological science is a splendid contribution to theology, as to the main truth of the unity and order of the plan of creation. Science, as well as Art, and all the arts, will become more and more the auxiliary to the interpretation of divine truth. Chrysostom, Luther, Chalmers, Arnold, and even John Wesley, were not afraid of learning and science, considering that the principles of the natural and spiritual worlds emanate from the same mind, although revelation will never be squared to science; and we may look in vain for this, for the Bible is not, and never can be made, a scientific book. But there is one field where a little scientific knowledge is all-important to the preacher; and that is, in the geography of biblical lands: he should know the difference between "Antioch in Syria" and "Antioch in Pisidia," and what was meant by the "Asia" of the New Testament, and the history and derivation of the "Galatians" of Asia Minor, and such geographical and historical facts as clear up difficulties in biblical interpretation.

6. *Application of the laws of common sense.* Everything must be brought to that. Great scholars sometimes lose their common sense; and the use of the homely and independent principle of common sense will do away with many perverse interpretations of Scripture which have been sustained by learning falsely applied.

7. *By the setting forth of the animus of the writer.* This would influence the meaning of much that was written by John, and James, and Peter, and Paul; and while the marked differences of the Pauline, Petrine, and Johannean manifestations of divine truth are presented to us in a forcible manner in such a work as Neander's "Planting and Training," the careful study of the inspired writings themselves is better still. Inspiration admits the human ele-

ment, and takes form from the peculiarities of individual mind and character; and, indeed, we have reason to suppose that idiosyncrasies of character were taken advantage of by the Spirit for the development of particular truths. Paul's mind, experience, and culture wonderfully fitted him for the expression and inculcation of the liberal doctrines of Christianity, which embrace the human race, and the universal application of the principles of redemption.

The peculiar condition of the author's mind *at the time of writing or speaking* is also important as affecting his meaning. Our Lord himself, when he was in the humblest and obscurest circumstances, spoke the words, "*I am the light of the world.*" When Paul was in the gloomy depths of the Mammertine prison he exhorted men to glory in the cross of Christ.

One expression, also, of a scriptural writer may be set over against another expression of the same writer, uttered in entirely different circumstances and states of mind; thus the character and history of David abound in striking contrasts; cross lights are strong lights.

8. *By setting forth the animus and spirit of the age in which the text was written.* The celestial utterances of the "Sermon on the Mount," and the broad precepts of Christianity in the Epistles, may be contrasted with the narrow Jewish theology, the clashing Greek philosophies, and the imperious and ferocious ideas of the best Roman civilization of the time.

9. *By showing the character and condition of the persons addressed.* "*Feed my sheep*" would not, in all probability, have been addressed to the loving apostle John, but rather to the ambitious, impetuous, forth-putting Peter. The Epistle to the Philippians was written to a kind of people very different from that to which the Epistle to the Corinthians was written.

10. *By showing the particular object for which the passage was spoken or written.* "*Sell all that thou hast*" was

not spoken to a poor man, but was addressed to the peculiar form of selfishness in which a wealthy young man's impenitence was garnered up. Our Lord's parables were intended to arouse thought, and to sow truth in the hearts of a people where the direct word of truth would have been treated with contempt, would have been trampled under foot.

11. *By bringing forth the hidden tone and qualities of the text.* That is, by listening to it not so much with the ear of the mind as with the ear of the heart, and catching its true spirit. Even its rhetorical qualities of naturalness, beauty, and force are not to be neglected; but by long meditation, and, above all, by prayer, one should strive to penetrate into the inmost soul of a passage, till its full original tone comes out. One should look into his own soul, and see how a text responds to his own spirit, since the study of the laws of the soul now will give one a key to unlock spiritual truth spoken ages ago, for the human heart is the same, and God is the same. The study of the laws of the divine mind will alone enable one to penetrate into the hidden meaning of the divine word; the spirit only comprehends the mind of the spirit. "*The natural man discerneth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are spiritually discerned.*"

As to the *qualities of the explanation*, it should be, —

1. *True.* It should develop the true meaning of the text, neither more nor less — not the meaning which this one or that one would give it, or which we ourselves, perhaps, would desire to give it. Honesty in the explanation strengthens all other parts of the discourse. One may strive for the greatest vividness of impression in bringing out the full idea of the passage; but when he goes beyond the truth taught, then it is an unworthy means of impression, which will react disastrously. It is even better to understate than to overstate the truth.

2. *Perspicuous.* The explanation is not the place for

discursiveness; there all should be exact and concise, clear and convincing. That is laying the foundations. Definition should be neat, proper, and finished work.[1] One should avoid learned terms, and should produce the results rather than the terms of philology. In the evolution of long passages it is particularly essential to avoid obscurity; and it is well to seize upon the main idea of the passage, and make that stand out clearly, while the subordinate parts are grouped around it.

3. *Brief.* Jonathan Edwards is said, by good judges of his sermonizing, to have spent too much time in exposition, thus confusing the true sense of the passage. Modern learning should expedite explanation. But sometimes it is not possible to make the explanation brief, for the whole sermon may depend upon, and, in fact, consist of, the evolving of a particular and perhaps recondite meaning of the text. Brevity is violated, (*a.*) *By explaining things which need no explanation;* a sermon is often rendered insufferably tedious in this way; (*b.*) *By seeking to explain simple ideas*, or absolute truths, which cannot be analyzed, such as "God," "love," "life," "spirit;" (*c.*) *By making side issues*, or going out of the way to explain difficulties which the text *might* suggest, but which it does not suggest to any in the congregation, and which do not fall within the scope of the sermon to clear up. The common mind is wearied with such excursions to explain difficulties that do not originate in itself, and which it cares nothing about. Solid difficulties it can appreciate, and it will patiently bear with their explanation. Those difficulties are chiefly practical — those hard things in truth, doctrine, and life, especially in the beginning of the spiritual life, of which all men have some experience.

While the explanation is thus concise, it need not be dry. It should not be a mere analysis of words and sentences,

[1] Quintilian's Instit., B. VII., c. 3, s. 1.

but a search after the living truth, conducted with animation and zest. "Definition," Vinet says, "as much as possible, should excite and stimulate the free and vital forces of the soul. Perfect definition is that which at the same time gives knowledge, comprehension, feeling, and faith."[1]

4. *Modest.* There may be all the scholarship that is needed in it, but it should be modestly expressed. Any pretentious display of commentators and names of learned authors, especially foreign authors, if harmless, is foolish. Above all, a rash and arrogant attack on our English version is immodest and harmful.[2]

5. *It should suggest the proposition or subject of the sermon.* It should build up the discourse to this point, where the proposition stands forth from all these preparatory scaffoldings of definition, firm and clear. There should be a natural and logical step from the explanation up to the proposition. The proposition — the explanation seems to say — is thus the great lesson of the text. "Whatever," says Abbé Maury, "in this part of the discourse, doth not lead to the principal parts of a sermon, is useless."

6. *It should bear upon every part, even upon the conclusion, of a sermon.* The explanation should skilfully prepare for each after step and thought; it should lay its train for every future blow. While there is development after the explanation, there should yet be the introduction of no absolutely new or foreign truth in the progress of the sermon, the idea of which, or the ground of the introduction of which, is not in some way brought out or suggested in the explanation.

As to the *time and place* of the explanation, its natural place is immediately after the introduction; but it is sometimes intermingled with the introduction, and sometimes takes the place of it. The more important of the two should

[1] Homiletics, p. 169.

[2] Waltham's Old English Prose Authors, vol. vi., p. 286.

precede. Nevertheless, although we have assigned to the explanation a formal place immediately after the introduction, and though the best authorities, ancient and modern, would give it this place; yet even this rule is not a rigid one; for however or wherever, in the course of a sermon, we *define* the text, and bring out its true sense more clearly, there is the explanation. It may be direct or indirect; it may precede or follow the theme; it may be in the nature of elaborate analysis, or of more brief, condensed synthesis; but the explanation, in all cases, is the use of the *critical* faculty employed upon the interpretation of the text, rather than the exercise of the logical or more strictly reasoning faculty, which arrives at general truths, and develops the ultimate relations of the truth which is thus distinctly evolved.

§ 14. *The Proposition.*

"A proposition," says Whately, "signifies a sentence in which something is said — affirmed or denied — of another. That which is spoken of is called the '*subject*' of the proposition; and that which is said of it is called the '*predicate;*' and these two are called the '*terms*' of the proposition, from their being in natural order the extremes or boundaries of it."[1]

A proposition is either logical or rhetorical. A logical proposition is "a judgment expressed in words;" as, "The character of sin is progressive." A logical proposition demands proof.

A rhetorical or general proposition is the simple announcement of any fact or truth: as, "The immutability of the law;" or, put into a more formal statement, "My subject of discourse is, the immutability of the law." A rhetorical proposition admits of general discussion, without strictly demanding proof.

[1] Reasoning, p. 32.

But what, definitely, *is the proposition of a sermon?* The proposition in a sermon is *that portion in which the subject of the sermon is more distinctly and more formally announced.*

The place of such a proposition may be at the beginning or at the end of a discourse, according to the method which we pursue — whether we take a given truth and analyze it, or, from its various scattered elements, we build it up gradually into the enunciation of some general synthetic truth.

The place, time, and method of announcing the proposition may thus be varied.

It may, however, be laid down as an almost invariable principle, that it increases the facility of apprehension and the degree of interest on the part of the audience, to announce, *as near the beginning of the discourse as possible*, what is the subject under discussion. Therefore, as a general rule, the proposition, in some more or less distinct shape, should immediately follow the explanation. At all events, the preacher should have a definite proposition or subject to speak to, whether he announces it sooner or later, or whether he announces it formally or not.

But the subject may be a complex one, involving many particular subjects, or propositions, under some more general theme, different parts of the same subject, or different views of the same subject. In such cases the proposition must be brought forward in parts, in the form of a more gradual development of the subject, at various stages of the discourse.

Perhaps, also, in some cases, it would not do to announce the subject at once; the audience are not prepared for it, or they may be prejudiced against it, or they may be entirely ignorant of it. At all events, a process of careful preparation is needed to clear the way for the definite statement of the subject. There are, however, few subjects that a minister is called to preach upon which he may not clearly and boldly announce at the very outset.

Mullois, the Catholic writer, says, "Let it be perceived at once what the subject is, and what you intend to say. Sketch out your truth in a few sententious words, clearly and emphatically enunciated. Let there be none of those vague and halting considerations which give the speaker the air of a man who is blindfolded, and strikes at random; none of those perplexing exordiums wherein every conceivable fancy is brought to bear upon a single idea, and which frequently elicit the remark, 'What is he driving at? What topic is he going to discuss?' Let the subject matter be vigorously stated at the outset, so that it may rivet the minds and engage the attention of the audience."[1]

It is true that in the *meditative* discourse, especially recommended by Fénelon, in which the thought develops itself from within, and flows along in the more hidden currents of a contemplative mind, the discourse would cease altogether to flow, where it was confined in the strict bounds of a proposition. In such a discourse the proposition is not formally announced, but rather is suggested through the whole course of the sermon. It dawns upon the hearer out of the apparent obscurity of the discussion, like the gradual light of day. Such a style of sermon requires a peculiar theme and a peculiar genius; and in unskilful hands, and from a mind not in the highest degree spiritual, if it were very commonly adopted, it would be disastrous to profitable and impressive teaching in the pulpit.

The *significance* and *importance* of the proposition to the strength and beauty of the discourse cannot be better illustrated than in the familiar example of the tree. If the argument forms the branches, the proposition forms the trunk, and the text the root. How can there be a tree without a trunk, or a discourse without a proposition? The

[1] The Clergy and the Pulpit, p. 118.

trunk, before it disparts itself into divisions, is narrow, rigid, fixed; it is not the graceful part of the tree; it is not, apparently, the living part of the tree; but how could there be any life or grace without it? The proposition is just this definite, unyielding, all-comprehending part of the sermon; the strength of the discourse is bound up in it; all the life of the sermon runs through it to the minutest extremity, while it draws its life immediately from the text, or the divine word. As one tree has generally one trunk and one character, and bears one kind of fruit and leaf, and is distinguished from all other trees, so one sermon should have one subject and one aim. Dr. Emmons was of this opinion. He says of himself, "For this reason I seldom preached textually, but chose my subject in the first place, and then chose a text adapted to the subject. This enabled me to make my sermons more simple, homogeneous, and pointed, while, at the same time, it served to confine the hearers' attention to one important leading sentiment. Those who preach textually are obliged to follow the text in all its branches, which often lead to different and unconnected subjects. Hence, by the time the preacher has gone through all the branches of the text, his sermon will become so complicated that no hearer can carry away any more of it than a few striking, unconnected expressions; whereas, by the opposite mode of preaching, the hearer may be master of the whole discourse, which *hangs together like a fleece of wool*."[1]

Although we cannot agree with Dr. Emmons's view of textual preaching, and of selecting a subject before a text, it is well to have his positive views upon the matter of a proposition.

Whatever may be true of a composition to be read, a *spoken* address needs some distinct proposition to speak upon; the speaker needs it to give him concentration, and

[1] Park's Life of Emmons, p. 274.

the majority of hearers, also, who do not or cannot make accurate discriminations, need to have something definite before them.

As to the *substance or matter of the proposition*, there are some rules to be observed.

1. *There should be a unity of the parts of the proposition with the whole.* The unity of the sermon depends upon the unity of the subject, and the subject is one which can be stated in a single proposition. There may be different parts, and widely distinct parts, of the subject discussed, but still they should all be comprehended, or be capable of being stated, in one more general subject; as, (1.) Where the *proposition has several subordinate parts;* e. g., "The means of spiritual growth" — (*a.*) communion with God, (*b.*) cultivation of the affections, (*c.*) active service, &c. (2.) Where there is *a general predicate of the coördinate parts of one whole;* e. g., "The nature, design, and importance of prayer." It is evident here that the last is the main idea, or the general predicate of all, and the discussion of the others should tend to the confirmation of the last. (3.) Where there are *other topics of inquiry, which the proposition fairly leads to.* Thus, having established the proposition that there is such a thing as a visible church, we may go on to show our relations to it, and its relations to us and to other men.

2. *The proposition should be plainly involved or implied in the text.* Its great beauty is to correspond with the meaning and spirit of the text. No theme other than that which finds its ground in the text should be employed. Often the text is the theme pure; it would be pedantical in such a case to use any terms other than those of the text; but it is generally necessary to bring what lies in the text into one particular point of view. A sermon has been called an ellipse with two points — text and theme. This ellipse should be as perfect as possible. Sometimes the proposition is too wide for the text; as John 14 : 13 — subject,

"Prayer:" "*And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son;*" whereas the true, limited subject of the passage is, "Prayer in the name of Jesus."[1] Sometimes the proposition may be too simple for a text's elaborate theme; as Eph. 4: 25 — subject, "Truthfulness:" "*Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another.*" But the true theme is, "The duty of truthfulness, as made obligatory by the membership of Christ." The same text may also have different sides to it, and may suggest quite different themes; all that we should be careful for is, that the theme is truly grounded in the text. Sometimes we cannot find a text which corresponds precisely to our subject; the proposition should then be made as identical as possible, and we may be obliged to use a general text in preaching on a particular theme, and so *vice versa*.

3. *The proposition should include, essentially, all that is to be discussed in the sermon; no less and no more.* The proposition is comprehended in the text, and the sermon in the proposition; one should therefore endeavor to make every word in the proposition suggestive of the sermon. The sermon or discussion is contained in the proposition as parts in a whole. The proposition is a handle of the sermon, to take it all up together, and a rudder of the sermon, to guide it in its definite course of thought. In a doctrinal sermon, especially, the proposition should be restricted to exactly what is discussed, except when a special advantage is to be gained by a connected view of the relations of doctrines; therefore we should strive to make the proposition as wide and comprehensive as we wish to make the discussion itself.

As to *the structure and qualities of the proposition*, the general idea of a good proposition is, that it should be, —

[1] Hagenbach's Homiletics.

1. *Plain and simple.* It should be as plain and simple as possible, without being commonplace. This simplicity of form may be violated, (*a.*) *By too scientific and philosophical a statement of the theme.* It should, on the contrary, be as concrete and popular as possible. Abstract and singular themes characterized the preaching of the eighteenth century; thus one of Reinhard's themes for a sermon was, "Upon the habit of the human mind to be indifferent towards a long and earnestly desired good, when the moment of possession comes." (*b.*) *By too metaphorical a form, except when the text itself is a figure.* Figure in a proposition is sometimes beautiful; such as "Christ the good shepherd," "Christ the rock of ages." But this last form of typifying the Saviour has been carried to an extravagant pitch; and German preachers have preached upon "Christ a carpenter," "a hat-maker," "a tailor," and "a clucking hen."[1] Anything fanciful in the proposition is peculiarly out of place; for if plain, strong common sense should appear anywhere, it is in the proposition; there may be carving and ornament in other parts of the vessel, but we want the rudder to be made of oak and iron.

2. *Neat and condensed.* This is for its easier use and remembrance. All unnecessary synonymes and weakening qualifications are to be avoided in the proposition. Compactness is an especial good quality. Any superfluous disjunctions, such as "or," "notwithstanding," "nevertheless," "so far forth," &c., should be dispensed with, and neat strength should be sought for. "In point of intensity, the proposition should rather fall below than fully express the idea of the sermon."[2] The proposition may sometimes comprehend in itself the divisions of the sermon, and announce them, thus making all the merely mechanical parts of the sermon as compact as possible; and this, perhaps, is the best way, generally, to construct a proposition. The

[1] Hagenbach. [2] Professor Phelps.

proposition may also consist of the grand divisions themselves. There may be several propositions; these form parts of one subject: coming one after another, they thus gradually develop the entire thought, subject, or comprehensive proposition.

3. *Specific.* Even the unity of the proposition must be sometimes sacrificed to attain this particularity of theme. The discussion of specific subjects — of the species under the genus, of the particular under the general — is indicative of an acute mind. The more restricted a proposition is, the smaller portion of a truth discussed, if ably discussed, the more intensity of interest will be aroused, and the more impression for good will be made. Where different kinds of propositions offer themselves, then, the more specific one is to be preferred; and every proposition should express a definite and complete idea.

4. *It should not be stated in the language of the text.* There should be a fresh form given to it; and although drawn immediately from the text, it should, if possible, present some new form or aspect of the old truth. An exception to this rule is, where the text is itself propositional in form, and makes a complete theme, as in that noblest and profoundest text in the Bible, "*For God is love.*"

5. *It should be prudently expressed.* It should not lay out too large a subject, or present it in too ambitious a way; e. g., "I shall prove in this sermon the doctrine of total depravity." Neither should it be in a paradoxical form, which always carries with it something of a vain or egotistic air.

6. *It should be varied.* Let there be no stereotyped way of stating the subject. Sometimes it is well to keep the main proposition in the background, and at other times to let it be the first word uttered, the first thing announced. As a rare exception, there may be through the whole sermon no definite statement of the subject, but it may be left

to be gathered by the hearer. As a rule, however, rarely to be departed from, there should be a clear and specific statement made of what one is intending to discuss.

In concluding this subject, the distinct warning should be repeated, that the propositional form belongs almost exclusively to the didactic discourse, and should not, therefore, be invariably followed. It presupposes the synthetic method of treatment. It requires that a distinct topic should be drawn from the text, gathering up and combining all the ideas of the text in a definite form, and then that the sermon should be built, not upon the text, but upon the proposition. This has been our usual New England method of preaching, which has come down, in fact, from the earliest Protestant preachers;[1] and it is not to be rashly given up, for it is admirably adapted to popular instruction; but, as has been often urged, a return to a simpler and more direct method of preaching from the word of God, and not from a human proposition which is drawn from it, would be healthful.

§ 15. *The Division.*

The fact of having formal divisions in a sermon, and the character of these divisions, are influenced, of course, by the kind of discussion which a subject may require or assume; since a certain principle of division is applicable to the peculiar character of the individual sermon. Thus the sermon may assume the *logical*, or the *inferential*, or the *subjective*, or the *textual* form; each requiring its peculiar divisions.

The *logical form of discussion* proceeds in a regular method of reasoning, by a series of connected propositions or divisions, each of which is true because the one that precedes it is true; and all of these tend to some general proposition or result. This form of discussion, it is evi-

[1] Vinet's Hist. de la Prédication des Réformés, etc., p. 599.

dent, *absolutely requires* divisions. It needs a clear statement of the proofs, or, at least, of each successive part of the argument, and of the connections of these parts. It should resemble, in lucidness of division and statement, a problem of Euclid.

The *inferential form of discussion*, in distinction from the logical, consists in a series of independent inferences, or observations, drawn from the subject, expanding the theme into its various relations and applications. It is sometimes, though rather awkwardly, called "*observational preaching*," — a very common method, because so easy. The objection to it is its easiness. One may fall into a loose and inconsequential style of remark, without close thought. Divisions here are merely the clear marking of each new observation or new thought, which if not so marked might lead to tedious confusion. This kind of discussion demands, perhaps, the more care in its divisional arrangement from its very facility and tendency to commonplace remark. F. W. Robertson's sermons abound in inferences; but they generally come in after an argumentative discussion, when he introduces a number of distinct and interesting observations. He mingles the logical and inferential form of sermon, which is a good method. Having thoughtfully set forth a particular idea, he draws remarks from it, and then proceeds to another part of the subject. This is illustrated in his sermon on "The Star in the East," Second Series.

The *subjective form of discussion* almost defies divisions, and scorns regular methods. It wanders "at its own sweet will." It is more liable to run into the essay style, and lose the form of direct address, than the logical or inferential modes; and yet even a meditative discourse should be somewhat amenable to the laws of method.

The *textual form of discussion*, following the very terms of the text, has and can have no very regular or formal divisions. But still, each distinct point or idea of the text

should be properly marked by some division, else even an expository sermon becomes a tangled skein.

We thus see that regular divisions belong to the logical or argumentative style of sermon more fitly than to any other; and yet, that all kinds of sermons demand something like "divisions," which clearly mark or set forth the different steps of the discourse.

What are the divisions of a sermon?

They are the different parts in which the main proposition or subject is formally separated and discussed. They do not refer to the free and actual development of a subject so much as to the special points of view in which the proposition is to be held up and regarded. They give a rapid and condensed aspect of the whole subject in its various parts, and thus the better enable the hearer to follow the thread of the discourse, or the ramifications of the argument. They form the chart of the discourse, which he is to hold in his hand. More than any other part, they mark the *plan* of the sermon; they are more important to the plan than is any other portion.

As to the *utility of divisions:* —

1. *They promote variety in unity.* They do not promote mere variety, for while they seem to separate, they really bind together, in a flexible but strong chain, the whole discourse. The articulations and joints of the human body do not destroy its unity, but belong to one system, one organized life. Thus all the groups of ideas implied in divisions and subdivisions are referred to some common centre of life; and they are not merely artificial divisions; they have some good reason for them, bearing upon the true power of the sermon. A just classification of the various ideas or aspects of a subject implies some general law of unity which binds them vitally together.

2. *They promote clearness.* Fénelon has made an objec-

tion to the use of divisions, because, he says, they were derived originally from the schoolmen; but even if they were thus derived, if, withal, they are valuable, there is no reason why they should not be used. Natural divisions of a discourse are older than the schoolmen; they spring from the nature of things. Good divisions are nothing more than the clear analysis of any given theme of thought. They break it up into its component parts or specific ideas; and this analytic process, when not carried into hair-splitting, aids the clear understanding of the subject. It assists the hearer to follow the road which the discussion takes; and he cannot entirely lose his way, even if he should be for a time thrown out. It also prevents the sermon from becoming a mass of incoherent and confused matter.

3. *They promote the progress of the discussion.* Good divisions enable the writer to step easily from a lower to a higher level of the subject. They mark the logical as well as the natural advancement of thought, and prevent it from becoming retrogressive or rotary. They thus keep the sermon, or rather the preacher, from wasting his power; they enable every thought to have its due weight; they prevent repetition. Good divisions are, in fact, the result of clear thinking. They themselves often constitute intrinsically much of the beauty and power of the discourse. "Aptness to seize the principle of division, and to effect the division correctly and fully under it, perhaps more than any other specific capability, marks the degree of ability in the construction of a discourse."[1]

4. *They refresh the mind and memory both of the speaker and hearer.* They introduce breaks; they enable the mind to repose a moment, and take a view of the field, to recall what has gone before, to note the progress which has been made, and to look forward to what is to come. The mind rests in the trench in which it is working its way up to the

[1] Day's Art of Discourse, p. 86.

stronghold, looking both backward and forward. Divisions also tend to keep up the attention and interest in the hearer's mind, to prevent its weariness, and to assist in guiding its thought.

As to the *number* of divisions, the principle should be strongly laid down that there should be *as few divisions as possible*. Divisions tend to make a discourse stiff; for the sermon should be a living growth from the text, a life rather than a work. All mechanical and artificial divisions should therefore be avoided, nay, more, contemned. The number of divisions, however, is governed, as we have seen, very much by the nature of the subject itself. A very *simple* subject requires but few divisions. The more a subject will bear analyzing, of course the more of division, separation, and classification of ideas is needed. A difficult theological theme may sometimes require many divisions, and even subdivisions.

There should be no arbitrary number of divisions; and, indeed, it is puerile to multiply divisions merely for the sake of doing so, and of giving a logical air to a sermon. This is not the way wise men talk. Different forms of stating the same thing do not demand different divisions. One should never introduce a new division unless it is absolutely required in order to make the sense plainer, and to mark the progress of thought. Dr. Fitch thinks that, as a general rule, three principal divisions are enough for a sermon. He takes as a model for the sacred oration, the oration of Cicero "*Pro Lege Manilia*," in which the orator has one design in a threefold division: "You must choose a general; you must choose an able general; you must choose Cneius Pompeius."

As to the *sources and qualities of divisions:* —

1. *Divisions should correspond to the nature of the subject.* This rule forbids all stereotyped character of divisions.

There may be, as we have seen, the logical, or the rhetorical, or the textual discussion, each of which requires its own style of divisional treatment. The text itself may often point out its own divisions far better than any which could be devised; but this will be more particularly noticed under the head of Development.

2. *Divisions should be made to comprehend or exhaust the contents of the main proposition.* This is the law of completeness in divisions; and as to the main divisions of the discourse, it is absolutely essential.[1] Divisions are to the proposition what the proposition is to the text. As the proposition aims to exhaust the text, divisions aim to take up into them the whole meaning and contents of the proposition, and to unfold the whole substance of the thought comprehended in it. Limit the proposition itself, rather than have it overrun the divisions. Divisions may, indeed, sometimes comprise the proposition itself, presenting it in different fragments or parts, which together form the general theme. Thus one of Nettleton's sermons — subject, 1. The departing prodigal; 2. The returning prodigal; without any other general proposition.

3. *Divisions should be governed by a law of unity which requires that each division suggest or bear vital relation to the proposition.* There can be no true theme which does not comprise one generic truth, or one class of truths, so that all its subordinate parts are but specific divisions of one general truth, and bear common relations to it. "The theme in division is ever a class; and its parts are denoted by the terms species, varieties, individuals."[2] This subject, or theme, is, of course, made up of its own various attributes, bound together by a common law of identity; and in division, this common principle of the relation of the specific parts to the generic whole should be strictly observed. No other principle of division should be intro-

[1] Day's Art of Discourse, p. 89. [2] Idem, p. 83.

duced, thus causing confusion of ideas; and only those divisions which belong to this single class of ideas set forth in the theme should be introduced.[1] No new classification of ideas should arise under a proposition which suggests one specific class of ideas, or one peculiar kind of attributes. To speak more generally, the one comprehensive and characteristic thought of the proposition should be reproduced in all the divisions, and every division should bear a necessary and living relation to this one thought, although the particular points treated of in each division may be quite dissimilar as regards each other. And the division may not always distinctly express the matter of the proposition, but may only suggest it; yet it should promote the general result, and the great moral truth or idea of the proposition should run through every division. It should be seen that there is but one bearing to all parts. The subordinate parts should not efface the principal part, but all the divisions should be such as will conduce to the carrying out of the principal idea.

4. *One division should not anticipate or include the succeeding one.* The distinction which separates the division should be real; and that which enters into one idea, or forms part of it, should not be made the theme of a separate division. Ideas which have a very near relation to each other should not form distinct divisions. There should be no blending or confounding of subordinate parts. If a new part, division, or thought is introduced, it should be something really new and distinct; for nothing weakens a discourse so much as a confusion and repetition of ideas.

5. *Divisions should prepare the way for something to come.* There should be progress in them. Yet, while they look forward to something more to come, they should not anticipate results, which are reserved for the development of the sermon, and especially for the conclusion. They should

[1] Day's Art of Discourse, p. 84.

not hinder or break the continuous and free movement of the discourse; they should rather aid it.

6. *Divisions belonging to the same class should be similar to each other in form.* This gives a neat finish to the sermon, and promotes unity.

In regard to the *composition of divisions*, which is simply the art of bringing into one view the several elements of a given subject, or separating it into its component parts, we may, in order to obtain just divisions of our theme, —

1. Divide the whole general subject or proposition into two or several particular propositions. These may be distinct, but true parts of one theme.

2. Separate the genus into its different species. The truths of Scripture are usually given in a generic form, and they are thus capable of almost endless specification and illustration.

3. View the truth in its various appropriate relations or bearings to other truths. One may be obliged to do this in order to eliminate the particular truth in hand, and make it stand out clear in its own proper place in the field of relative truth.

4. Marshal and discuss the principal proofs or arguments of the theme in hand. A truth of Scripture stands on its own ground of inspired authority; but even this may be strengthened and confirmed by reasoning.

5. Exhibit the grand motives of any given duty or proposition, including such duty.

6. Illustrate the fact or duty involved in the subject in various practical ways and observations; or, in brief, divisions may proceed by *Classification*, *Analysis*, *Relations*, *Proofs*, *Motives*, *Illustration*.[1]

[1] The sources of divisions, according to rhetoricians, are manifold. One writer, for example, states sixteen of them. We would refer the reader, for different kinds of divisions which may be employed, especially in the textual sermon, and which are useful for reference in composing a sermon, to Kidder's Homiletics, p. 201.

In the *order* or *arrangement* of divisions, the general principle is, that they should proceed according to the *necessity of the subject*, or the law of arrangement which a particular subject contains within itself when evolved by thought; or, more specifically, (1.) By an order of *logical necessity*, as the discussion of the nature of the subject, and then of its circumstances and proofs, or of its *what*, *how*, and *why*. (2.) By an order of *inherent dignity or value of ideas*. This may be called the natural order. (3.) By an order of *time;* e. g., reason, Scripture, experience, would be generally the best order, because Scripture includes reason, and experience, reason and Scripture. The order of cause and effect would come under this principle. (4.) Order of *progressive strength of argument*. We should advance from the weaker to the stronger argument; or, one may begin with the strong and end with the strong, putting the weaker arguments in the middle. (5.) Order of *progress from the abstract to the concrete*—from *à priori* to *à posteriori*—from arbitrary ideas to the realized consciousness of these in fact and experience. (6.) Order of *personal interest*. Those thoughts and facts which most nearly concern our hearers themselves come with more force last—God, the church, yourselves. One should so arrange his divisions as to secure progressive interest and moral impression; he should bear down on the individual conscience and heart.

As was said of the proposition, each division should be plain and perspicuous; should be clearly cut; should give complete sense by itself; should not be too commonplace or easy; and it should be so announced as best to promote the clear progress of the discussion, and its remembrance by the audience.

As to the utility of *numbering* divisions, the tendency is certainly, at the present time, not to announce divisions numerically. But if it were not a paradox to say so, we think a numerical division is useful when it is needed; that

is, when it makes more plain the discussion of a truth. If a sermon is to hide thought, or to amuse an audience, then, by all means, omit the formality of numbers; yet if divisions are useful at all, it may be sometimes useful to number them, and the subject itself may demand it. But the numbering impairs freedom, and imparts a formal character to a discourse; therefore we think it best never to number divisions, or, what is the same thing, actually to announce the number of divisions, unless numbers are absolutely needed to make the discourse more memorable and useful; for, as says Quintilian, "division diminishes the appearance of strength."[1] Let all the connections of a discourse, therefore, be made as neatly as possible, and let the jointures be concealed, as Nature conceals them. The more intelligent the audience, the less necessity of formal numerical statements of divisions at all.

As to the *place* or *time* of announcing divisions, this may be either before the discussion, during its progress, or at its close. The last was frequently Luther's mode. Generally speaking, it is best to announce divisions at the beginning, especially if the sermon is of a topical character. While a cultivated taste would prefer never formally to announce divisions, utility is to be placed before taste in sermonizing.

§ 16. *The Development.*

The development of the sermon is *the whole body of it as related severally to the text, the subject, the proposition, and the divisions.* These originate, mark, and limit the development.

The development, in other words, is the carrying out and filling up of the plan, even as the divisions are the carrying out of the proposition, and the proposition of the text. It is the actual treatment of the theme in hand, the free and

[1] Instit., B. II., c. 12, s. 8.

living current of thought, sentiment, and remark, after the definite subject and the general outline of treatment have been designated. The word "*body*" expresses what is meant by the development better than any other word.

The general character of the development of a discourse is decided chiefly by the character of the *subject*, although the *object*, or the main purpose we have in view, has also its influence. We have alluded already, in treating of divisions, to the different forms of discussion which a theme may assume; we would now notice these a little more carefully. The principal modes of discussion, in relation to the real development of a sermon, are fourfold: the *Expository*, the *Illustrative*, the *Argumentative*, and the *Persuasive*.

1. *Expository development.* The expository sermon constitutes, as has been often said, perhaps the most genuine and primitive method of preaching, for it confines itself to setting forth the meaning of Scripture, "the ideas of God." It ends in making a passage of Scripture plain to the hearers' mind and heart. Expository sermons may be of two kinds: (*a.*) *A simple exposition of the several clauses of a passage of Scripture in their order.* This is useful when the portion of Scripture is fragmentary, and affords no continuous thread of argument, and also when there are difficulties and ambiguities in the text to be critically explained. Such sermons may embrace the exposition of a single passage of Scripture, or of a whole book of Scripture, in the exact order of its passages. (*b.*) *A brief setting forth of the definite truth or truths which the passage thus explained conveys, especially in the way of practical observations and lessons.* This comes nearer than the other mode to the topical form of discourse, but it requires a lengthened exposition, which forms the body of the sermon. Chalmers's lectures on the Epistle to the Romans are fine examples of this kind of expository preaching; he shows the connections of thought between many detached passages, and develops their truth in

more general practical propositions. This mingling of the textual and topical styles is perhaps, on the whole, the most profitable and instructive method of preaching, as well as the most popular and interesting. Were it more generally adopted, it would infuse a new life into our preaching.

Some preachers fail to make expository preaching interesting by their extremely dry and barren manner of treating the Scriptures. They bring their exegetical process, instead of its results, into the pulpit. In an article on expository preaching in the New Englander (January, 1866), the writer says, "In this kind of preaching you should take up your subjects, and treat them in a free, popular manner, and never *exegetically*, as in the schools. In your private study, and for your own benefit, cut and trim an exegesis as much as you will; but never think of carrying your pruning knife and grafting tools into the desk with you; or, if you do, keep them out of sight. Common minds love to see good work when it is done, but they dislike the labor of doing it themselves, and the tedium of standing by to see how others do it."

But the reason why preachers most commonly fail in expository preaching is, that they do not put study enough into it; they do not give close thought to the exegesis of the passage, to make it full and rich. They think they can "get up" an expository sermon in a short time; whereas that method, above all, requires original investigation, and, perhaps, more close and searching study than any other, for in it there is less left to invention.

True expository preaching is the most profitable of all to the preacher himself, because it enriches his scriptural knowledge, and leads him deeper into the word of God. It gives him broader views of revealed truth, it teaches him to read the sacred writings in a connected way, and it follows out an inspired train of thought or argument sometimes through a whole book. It prevents him, also, from misapplying and misusing individual texts, by taking them out

of their right relations. It lends variety to preaching, and does not shut it up to a few doctrinal subjects; it ranges through the broad fields of the word, and goes from theme to theme, as the stream of revelation flows on through the varied regions of divine truth. Expository preaching may lose its interest by being made too formal, by becoming too orderly and topical, by drawing out the truths of a passage into propositions too distinct and rigid; whereas the mind of the preacher should hover around the passage, should recur to it again and again, should (as has been said) suck the sweetness from it like a bee; should, in ever nearer and more penetrating ways, draw out its life and exhaust its deep and precious meaning. Exhaust, did we say? That would be impossible; for, after all the preaching, how much there is still in the divine word which is fresh, unexplored, and almost entirely unknown! Expository preaching also suggests numberless subjects for sermons. It gives an opportunity to remark upon a great many themes on which one would not desire to preach a whole sermon, and it also gives an opportunity sometimes to administer salutary reproof in an indirect way. It is, in fact, the most free and practical method of preaching; it comes home to the heart the quickest. It is, above all, feeding the people with the "bread of life," with real biblical nutriment, with that spiritual food which all souls need, and which this age and every age require. There is also in it less of the exclusively human element than in topical preaching; the Holy Spirit seems to suggest and to provide the materials for the sermon. It is, therefore, a good change from the logical method, where the form often tyrannizes over the substance; and a mingling of the two methods of topical and expository preaching will serve to correct the false tendencies of both. Dr. John M. Mason's remarks may be quoted on this point, though they should be received with some reservation. He says, "Do not choose a man who always preaches upon insulated texts. I care not how powerful or eloquent he may be in handling

them. The effect of his power and eloquence will be, to banish a taste for the word of God, and to substitute the preacher in its place. You have been accustomed to hear that word preached to you in its connection. Never permit that practice to drop. Foreign churches call it *lecturing;* and when done with discretion, I can assure you that, while it is of all exercises the most difficult for the preacher, it is, in the same proportion, the most profitable for you. It has this peculiar advantage, that in going through a book of Scripture, it spreads out before you all sorts of character, and all forms of opinion, and gives the preacher an opportunity of striking every kind of evil and of error, without subjecting himself to the invidious suspicion of aiming his discourses at individuals."

2. *Illustrative development.* This has reference to the illustration of truth by the proof and evolution of facts, rather than of words or ideas. It may be chiefly characterized as the *historical* sermon. As the Bible is preeminently a book of facts, and has a noble historical development in itself, this may form a legitimate and interesting mode of preaching, as it was, indeed, the method of the apostles. As all men love to see truth in living forms, they will listen with interest to lessons drawn from sacred history and biography, which is, indeed, the rich residuum of the deepest experience of the race. The great features and facts of Paul's life, in connection with the old religions and civilizations of the age in which he lived, cannot fail to arrest attention, and lead to nobler and higher thought. We are not to become simply historians in the pulpit, but to set forth and impress the higher truth through the living lessons of history, of all history, not only that of the Bible times and personages, but of man, and of the church in all ages — of the great facts and events of modern days bearing upon the spiritual welfare of man and the interests of Christ's kingdom in the earth. Protestant preaching has

doubtless lost something here; and, in this respect, we may learn a lesson from the Roman Catholics; they choose, as themes for illustrative preaching, the times and examples of eminent Christians, both ancient and modern.

This kind of preaching has its own mode of developing a subject, and allows of a more discursive and generalizing method. It permits a freer use of the imagination, where it does not transcend the bounds of truth. It permits the drawing of various, and sometimes unaccustomed, remarks and lessons from the facts evolved — lessons often of a homely, personal, and direct kind. It has been said that "Demosthenes' arguments were Demosthenes' facts;" and so the argument of every sermon should rest solidly on facts.

A writer before quoted, in the New Englander (July, 1863), remarks, "Pulpit eloquence must be grounded on the plainest narrative. Afterwards it may warm itself until it exhales symbols of every form and color; speaks only through its most poetic forms; but, first and last, it must be a biblical statement of fact. The orator is thereby an orator, that he keeps his feet ever on a fact." Let us be careful, then, not to permit our dogma, or doctrine, or theory, or sentiment, or lesson, to lose its foundation in biblical fact and history, since our Saviour's preaching itself was founded upon the great facts of human consciousness and divine revelation.

3. *Argumentative development.* This is to convince the judgment by bringing out and establishing the truth through proof and evidence. Thus in the text "*By grace ye are saved*," the argumentative development would reason upon and show the truth of this; while the expository and illustrative developments would simply set forth the scriptural account of the method of salvation by grace; and, exemplify it. All subjects are not fitted for the argumentative development, although, perhaps, reasoning may be applied to

any subject which admits of being true or false; but doctrinal subjects — those which contain scriptural teaching, that may be confirmed by reasons and proofs — are the chief subjects for argumentative development.

This method also has its advantages; indeed, many writers, among them Dr. Fitch, prescribe it as the best and invariable method of sermonizing. Argument impresses truth already believed, and convinces of truth not before believed. An enlightened faith rests on proper grounds of evidence, either external or internal, and the more fully these grounds are set forth, the more firmly established will be the faith.

Argument is also often useful in arousing the feelings. The mind becomes interested in a truth which is capable of clear proof, and it is overcome by the spiritual weapons of reason and truth. The most successful preachers, as instruments of producing immediate conversion, the most successful revival preachers, are often at first severely argumentative. They thus gain power to bear down upon the conscience and heart. The argumentative style of sermon is so common with us in New England, that we usually speak of the "body" or "development" of the discourse as "the argument."

The *argumentative development* of a sermon is of two kinds: the *indirect* and the *direct*. I. The *indirect*. Under this comes, (*a.*) The *refutation of objections*. This should generally be in the first part of the body of a discourse, because the last words should be the strongest, and should leave a positive impression. When the objections are trivial, they need not be noticed; but when they are real, and present truly intellectual difficulties, it is best to discuss them one by one. Refutation removes the obstacles and clears away the rubbish, before we begin to build the argument. And there is nothing like grappling with an antagonist, to excite interest, for man naturally loves fighting, and almost every one is more forcible in refuting than in proving. But

the preaching should not stop at the refutation; for Christianity is not a negative system — it is full of reasons.

In refutation we should be especially careful to be candid, since in this way we gain the confidence of our hearers when we proceed to the proof. We may gain a decided advantage sometimes in turning an objection into a proof; we thus carry the war into Africa. No trifling objections should be stated. No time should be spent in demolishing men of straw. And above all things, acrimony in refuting opposing arguments should be avoided. (*b.*) *The supposititious form of argument.*[1] This is another form of indirect argument. It consists in bringing up several different forms of suppositions, beginning with the least plausible; and, by discussing and disproving these in succession, you lay the way for the one which you wish to establish. Thus the doctrine of human sinfulness may be proved by gradually annihilating the various hypotheses of human goodness which men adduce for their own escape from this humbling and consuming truth, and by leaving it as the only possible truth. (*c.*) The *serial or gradual argument.* This form of indirect argument begins with some distinct and common truth, that is readily conceded by your hearer, and then comes up by making the predicate of one proved truth the subject of another, until what you wish specially to prove presents itself in an irresistible form, as a foregone conclusion.[2] 2. The *direct method of argument.* This consists in the adducing of direct and positive proof. The subjects of pulpit discourse are commonly those which come under the general department of moral evidence. This permits, and even requires, proof. *Proof* is that mental act or process by which we arrive at certainty in our judgments respecting truth; and when the argument relates strictly to truth, or to fact, the proofs are called ***reasons;*** when it is concerning right, or duty, they are called

[1] Dr. Fitch. [2] Idem.

motives. Argument deals chiefly with the first, or with reasons.

As to the *sources of proof*, they are commonly divided into two classes — *mediate* and *immediate*. 1. The *immediate* are those which spring from, (*a.*) *Consciousness*, or that which appeals to the internal sense of right in the mere statement of a truth. (*b.*) *Perception*, or that which is the object of our own observation as regards cause and effect — as, Poison kills. (*c.*) *Testimony*, or the related perceptions of others — in fact, a common and universal perception. (*d.*) *Intuition*, which pertains to the apprehension of abstract truths — as purely mathematical and rational truths that are the objects of spontaneous belief, because the reasons for them exist in the mind itself.

Dr. Fitch would add to these *common sense*, which is a kind of induction from general grounds of human thought and observation. 2. The *mediate sources of proof* are those which are founded upon the principle that all truth is one, and that its various parts have essential relations to each other. This admits of reasoning from what is known to what is unknown — from what is established to what is to be established; in a word, if such and such things are true, other things must be true: it is the usual method of deductive reasoning.

We would make two or three *suggestions in relation to the strictly argumentative development* of a discourse: —

(1.) *In taking an argumentative position one should be sure that it is a strong one.* The premise taken in the beginning should be thoughtfully taken; and the truth you seek to establish should be fairly reasoned out, or be capable of being reasoned out, and not be a mere assumption.

(2.) *In the arrangement of an argument one should exercise great judiciousness and care.* One should observe the two great principles of attending to the force of probability

that unites the proof to the conclusion, and to the right connection between the arguments themselves.[1]

Without entering into all the rules upon the method and order of argumentative preaching, we would just notice the common argument from the Scriptures. As a general rule, when the direct testimony of Scripture forms a part in a series of arguments, it should occupy the first place. If the series relates to God, it should always be first; e. g., "the veracity of God." The natural and true order would be, 1. His own word as to his veracity. 2. His conduct as showing this. But in speaking of man we should sometimes take this testimony of God last, since he is omniscient and infallible. If we speak to unbelievers, we may adduce Scripture first, and then the proofs from reason, which are stronger in their minds; but when we speak directly to Christians, the Scripture proof should be used last. They may distrust your reasoning, but they will bow to the Scriptures, while still the reasoning may be useful in confirming the truth.[2]

(3.) *The discourse should rarely or never be exclusively argumentative.* Thought should not lose its life by going through a strictly dialectic process. The sermon is not, after all, a proposition of Euclid. No part of it should be entirely disconnected from the will, the feelings, and the experience of men. It should not become a matter of pure intellect. The preacher may in this way conquer, but he will not convince nor convert.

To this suggestion that the sermon itself should rarely be wholly or exclusively argumentative, might be added, that the general style of preaching should not be exclusively argumentative.

We want often simpler practical sermons — sermons that do not discuss, but only earnestly express, religious truth and feeling — sermons that spring from the heart more than the head — sermons, too, that have a more attractive literary

[1] Dr. Fitch. [2] Idem.

form where the imagination plays freely; sermons that cast aside the stiff robes of argumentation, and are unbound, spontaneous, spiritual. The preacher of an argumentative cast of mind should especially guard against the temptation of this tendency, and should cultivate freer forms of discourse; and so, on the other hand, the illogical and sensational preacher should cultivate a severer, solider style, just as we give mathematics to a dreamer to make him think. As the argumentative method implies the predominance of the human over the divine element in preaching, a more cautious use of it, and a return to a simpler, less ambitious, and more spiritual manner of preaching, are to be commended.

(4.) *The argument should not be too high or abstruse for the audience.* It may be very close and powerful, but it should ground itself in human nature, or in the common laws, truths, and motives of the human mind, which all men appreciate and understand. It has been said that "the foundations of argument in the pulpit must, to a great extent, be commonplace."

4. *Persuasive development.* This, too, is a kind of argumentative discussion for the purpose of conviction, but it deals chiefly with *motives*, rather than proofs or reasons. It does not end with mere conviction, but rather with persuasion. It addresses the will with motives of good, urging it to the performance of immediate duty. If the will of the hearer is opposed to the truth, the aim is to remove the will from its present object of choice, and to fix it upon another and true object; if the will is apathetic or indifferent, the aim is to awaken it to action and choice; if the will is favorable, the aim is to encourage and strengthen this good purpose. This method of development partakes somewhat of the *hortatory* style of sermon, being addressed to the feelings as well as the reason. It requires something more than proof. A man may be convinced by proof, but

he must be persuaded to act and choose by motives. Few preachers can afford to leave out the persuasive element. This should be manifested in the course of the development. We want to bring men to a choice; to make them rise up and *do* the word of the Lord.

There must be some ultimate ground of choice, or there could be no object or ground of persuasion. Choice implies the existence of an alternative. Now, it is the object of persuasive reasoning to show others the true reasons and motives of choice, that, these being fully set before the mind, and deliberately weighed, the mind may be led to make the good choice. The end of all persuasion is, to show that the greatest good lies on the side of duty. The obvious means to this are, presenting inducements, considerations, motives; for that which moves a man to do anything, is a motive. Of course the preacher of righteousness can deal only with good and true motives. What, then, are the *sources of persuasion?*

Vinet reduces all motives which the preacher can employ to two — *goodness* and *happiness*. In presenting the motive of *happiness*, one should be careful to present the high and true idea of happiness, ending in the blessedness of the Christian; he should show that goodness and happiness are necessarily and finally united, are really one, and that the old stoic axiom, "To be conscious of virtue is happiness," is realized in an infinitely higher sense in the Christian life. There is even a true *self-love* which may be justly appealed to. In fact, the tastes, desires, sympathies, and affections of our nature — all that powerful side of our nature — are not to be lost sight of, since it is not mere reason that moves men to act; it is also feeling, desire, affection.

Nothing is more wonderfully adapted to move our deepest feelings than the motives presented in the gospel. Christ, being lifted up, does draw all men unto him. The attractions of the cross are even greater than the terrors of the

law; and the terrors of the law are to be preached, "to persuade men," as *motives* of the gospel.

We would mention a few of these motives of persuasion which a preacher of the gospel might legitimately employ.

(*a.*) *The good and happiness of this life, which are greater on the side of righteousness than of unrighteousness.* The man who has real uprightness of heart is the most apt to secure human friendship and worldly prosperity, to succeed in his business and in whatever he undertakes to do with his fellow-men. Religion has the promise of this life, as well as of that to come. And yet one should be guarded here in not dwelling exclusively, as is sometimes done, on this lower or prudential range of motives.

(*b.*) *The good which comes from self-approval.* He who does a good act is amply repaid in his own mind.

(*c.*) *The good and happiness which accrue to other beings by righteous action;* and, of course, the misery which accrues from the opposite course; for, in all these motives, that which dissuades from evil is a motive to persuade to good. The condemnation and misery of wicked men form an indirect persuasive to goodness. Just fear is thus a strong motive.

(*d.*) *The good which comes from the exercise of the holy affections, to ourselves, to others, and to the universe.*

(*e.*) *The doing of right because it is right — for its own sake.* This meets an unselfish and divinely-implanted motive in our own nature and consciousness.

(*f.*) *The moving power of the loving will of God, made known in his Son Jesus Christ.* Christ is the central motive to be set forth by the Christian preacher — the love of God in Christ to sinners. Gratitude, trust, love, are appealed to here in the strongest conceivable forms. *Grace* is the grand motive of the gospel.

(*g.*) *The eternal as well as temporal happiness arising from righteous action.* He who does the will of God will share the blessedness of God himself forever.

(*h.*) *The glory of God.* To the true and perfect mind this is the highest motive, and, in one sense, the only motive.

In these motives we appeal both to the lower and higher elements of our nature, to our self-interest, and to the pure, unselfish principle of the good of others and the glory of God.

As to the legitimate *methods of persuasion* in preaching, whether indirect or direct, these may be mentioned as some of them: —

1. *The indirect method of the use of dissuasives to wrong action, springing from the evil which will certainly accrue.* As has been said, the dissuading from evil is, in fact, one method to persuade to good. The evils and final miseries of sin are the persuasives of holiness.

2. *The indirect method of the presentation of the alternative choice;* i. e., if one is not moved by all the good considerations which are offered, he must take the alternative.

3. *The use of mixed arguments and motives,* blending the argumentative and persuasive forms of development.

4. *The use of direct motives,* without any abstract reasoning or circumlocution addressed to the simple end to move the will and heart.

Of course our method of persuasion should be adapted to the class of hearers we address; and we should proceed in a natural way, by first interesting the intellect, bringing out intelligently the motives of persuasion, showing their importance, and their *personal* importance, and pressing them home upon the heart.

Vivid description, moral painting, is a powerful method of persuasion, in which one is led to see his own heart in the masterly delineation of character.

In striving to *overcome prejudices,* before the true motives can be presented, there are two methods: first, to endeavor to do away entirely with the false impression, by showing how unjust and absurd it is; and, secondly, to admit the feeling, or prejudice, or passion, as having, perhaps, some

ground for its existence, but to give it a truer direction. One says, for instance, "If I were only a Christian, I would be a better man than some Christians whom I know." Then press him to *be* such a Christian as he boasts that he would be. Another says, "I am too ambitious to be a follower of Christ. I freely confess that I am too aspiring to be thus lowly and humble." Then tell him that Christianity does not extinguish the natural motive of ambition, but leads to a purer ambition for things truly great and honorable.

Paul's reasoning with the Athenians in respect to the "unknown God" is one illustration of the skilful employment of this kind of persuasive argument, yielding as it does to the feeling or opinion of others for the moment, so far as it is not harmful to do so, in order to use it with power for the conviction and persuasion of those very persons. One does not often persuade a man to do right by proving to him that he is wrong; but if, by kindly and skilfully showing him that he is condemned by himself, by his own truer impulses and nobler reason, you may convict him of wrong without injuring his self-respect and arousing his antagonism; you not only convict, but persuade.

What may be termed the *motive of the possible* — sometimes used by preachers — should be employed very cautiously, if employed at all; e. g., *possibly* this may be all true; *possibly* there may be such a thing as the eternal condemnation of the irreligious. Such reasoning is of doubtful character, and is apt to cause injurious reaction. It is better to preach the things that *are*, rather than those that may be.

All these different modes of development which have been mentioned will, of course, vary widely in their form, style, and spirit; but still there are some simple principles or qualities which should be found in the development of all kinds of sermons; these are, the qualities of *unity*, *roundness* or *perfectness*, *progress*, and *balance* or *proportion*.

1. *Unity.* This has been and will be often mentioned in various relations; but it cannot be too much urged. One general aim, one main impression, should, if possible, be given to one discourse; and this is all we ought to expect for one discourse. This unity should run through its whole substance, and animate every fibre. This unity may be destroyed by yielding to the temptation of dwelling too long upon an interesting but isolated thought; by treating entirely diverse topics in one discourse, with no general principle uniting them; by mixing up two or more similar thoughts; by following out metaphorical language wearisomely or trivially. Any discussion, on any of the parts of the sermon, however profitable and forcible in itself, which is not pertinent to the main subject, impairs unity. The whole development should have regard to every part.

2. *Roundness* or *perfectness.* This regards the parts as well as the whole. There should be freedom in carrying out every part of a discourse to its legitimate end of interest, employing all the stores of thought and illustration. This is the portion of the discourse for its life to flow out in fullest currents, and not to be hampered by plans and rules. Each thought should be as thoroughly developed as if there were no other thought in the discourse. The idea of the main development should not override or destroy the complete finish, both intellectual and literary, of each of its parts. How full in this development are the sermons of the Plymouth Pulpit, where the preacher seems to give unlimited play to every faculty and every emotion, carrying out a thought to its furthest ramifications, drawing from all the richness of nature and life, and yet not without a method or a sagacious purpose which points each illustration, guides each flight of fancy, and, while seemingly most unrestrained, brings all to bear with immense power upon some one practical truth or lesson!

This free development of each of the parts, combined with the workman-like welding together of all in one whole,

so that there is no imperfect, meagre, flat, and unsatisfying portion of the sermon, constitutes completeness.

3. *Progress.* This has reference to the right ordering of thoughts, so that one thought should prepare for and be succeeded by another which forms an advance; this secures an increasing momentum of impression. The sermon should not repeat itself, or retrace its steps, but go on with accelerated power to the end.

4. *Balance* or *proportion.* This has relation to the proportion and space each part or thought should occupy in regard to the main development, and to each other part of the discourse. Vigorous brevity is thus secured where it is needed, and careful elaborateness where it is essential. Of course the object we have in view, and the peculiar character of the sermon, must decide this. In an expository sermon, the explanation, which is commonly brief, becomes the elaborate part of the discourse. It is a great beauty when a preacher knows in what part the real pith of his sermon lies, and where to lay out his strength. This gives tone to the sermon. The general idea of proportion is, that there should be a well-made and powerful body to the sermon. The strength should be, as it were, in the *loins* of the discourse. The sermon should be thoroughly compacted, and able to carry itself nobly; not a dwarf with a giant's head and a feeble body.

That which is wanted in the body of a sermon is solidity of thought, rapidity of discussion, and a spiritual earnestness of purpose rising above every merely intellectual aim, and pressing the truth with every reason and motive drawn from time and eternity upon the individual heart. Let there be an expanding fulness here, an unbound, rich, and living thought, a development which is a real growth from the germ of scriptural truth taken into the fructifying soil of the soul's meditation, ample and beautiful, and filled with nourishing fruit.

We might conceive the ideal of a Christian sermon, not

yet attained, or not attained by all, but which is adapted to the needs of our highest modern civilization, while it does not lose the earnestness and practical aim of the gospel. It is unpretentious, devotional, springing from the meditation of a holy soul upon the Scriptures, with Christ as the central, burning theme; tender and full of love, but strong in apostolic faith, like the preaching of masculine Paul and Luther; courageously hopeful for man, and filled with the true "enthusiasm of humanity;" thoughtful and substantial in reasoning, but not intellectual so truly as *spiritual;* not confined in any set forms, but free with that liberty wherewith Christ makes free; with an internal rather than external method of thought; of the highest literary style, because fresh and simple, almost plain and homely, so that the ignorant man and the child may understand what feeds the most highly educated hearer; as well fitted for backwoodsmen as for philosophers, because it is deep and penetrating, is drawn from the common wells of truth and salvation, appeals to the common wants and desires of the heart, and is fitted to convert men from sin, and to lead them to the life of God. Nothing could be so simple, and yet nothing so high and difficult, as such a sermon. It could not be learned in the schools, for it is not theological, though it teaches a true theology. It must be taught by the spirit of Christ to the consecrated mind that has conscientiously and laboriously done its part in the way of thorough preparation.

The development of such a sermon will be but the expansion and filling out of thoughts and words furnished by the secretly inspiring influences of the Holy Spirit, and it will therefore be divinely adapted to the salvation of sinful men, and the edification of the church of Christ.

§ 17. *The Conclusion.*

The conclusion of a sermon is *the fit winding up and the practical application of all that has preceded.* In oratory it is called the "peroration." It holds the same relation to the end of the sermon that the "exordium" or introduction does to the beginning. It is not really the sermon itself, but is the taking leave of the subject in such a way as to gather up and forcibly impress its teachings. In the conclusion, the preacher, if he has wandered away from his hearers, is drawn back to them; he is reminded that it is for them he is preaching, and for their spiritual welfare; he is to leave the truth in their hearts.

The conclusion is a trying and perilous part of the discourse, because it is always difficult to stop gracefully, to finish effectively. Boileau says, —

"Qui ne sut se borner ne sut jamais écrire."

It is indeed a great thing to know when to stop. Luther, speaking of the qualities of a good preacher, says that "he should know when to make an end." There is a true conclusion to every discourse. The god Terminus alone, at the building of Rome, would not yield to Jove himself. The conclusions of great literary works, such as Paradise Lost, Jerusalem Delivered, and Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, are memorable for their beautiful simplicity. Many an effective sermon has been greatly weakened by drawing out its conclusion to too great length. Rev. William Taylor has well said, "Often when a preacher has driven a nail in a sure place, instead of clinching it, and securing well the advantage, he hammers away till he breaks the head off, or splits the board."

The *importance and advantages of a good conclusion* are seen in the following reasons: —

1. *It enables the preacher to carry out the true idea of preaching;* i. e., to give a *practical application* to what he preaches, directing it to the conscience and heart of his hearers. The end of preaching is the actual conversion and sanctification of souls. There may be, however, exceptions to the rule that the application should come in the conclusion, (*a.*) *When, from the nature of the discussion, there is necessarily a continuous application in the body of the sermon.*[1] In certain kinds of discourse, as, for instance, expository, hortatory, and historical discourses, the application may naturally run along with the development of the sermon, or, where the divisions of a topical sermon are themselves practical, no direct practical application is needed at the end. The less elaborate and argumentative the discourse, the less need of reserving the application for the end. (*b.*) *When, from the nature of the audience or the occasion, there is necessarily a continuous application of the subject.* The more general, illiterate, and youthful the audience, the more need of a running application of the theme to the conscience and heart, in order to keep attention alive, and to produce a vivid impression.

But, notwithstanding these exceptions, a good conclusion is needed to enforce the moral impression of a whole sermon; and in the case of a strictly topical and argumentative discourse, it is almost without exception essential.

2. *It combines the scattered impressions of a sermon into one powerful impression, and thus adds to the effect of whatever has gone before.* The skilful preacher understands this, and shapes his whole sermon so as to make the conclusion effective, and to leave a deep impression at last.

3. *It preserves the sensibilities of preacher and hearer from being exhausted.* It does this by retaining all the freshness and force of feeling for the final appeal.

4. *It avoids a rude abruptness in closing.* It gives a mo-

[1] Professor Phelps.

ment's opportunity for the mind to pause and reflect upon the whole subject gone over; it is the attainment of a momentary superior elevation, from which the eye of the speaker and hearer may sweep back over the sermon, and take in its entire moral impression.

We will now look at the *different parts of the conclusion*. The "conclusion" or "peroration" was, in ancient oratory, divided into the *recapitulation* and the *appeal to the passions*. In modern times, and especially in the sermon, the conclusion, rhetorically treated, is commonly divided into, 1. *Recapitulation;* 2. *Applications*, *inferences*, and *remarks;* 3. *Appeal to the feelings*, or personal appeal. Each of these, or all combined, may form the conclusion.

And what the conclusion should be — whether one of these parts should be chosen, or all of them — is to be decided by the character of the development, and by studying how to increase the force of the moral impression, which should be strongest at the end. There ought to be no set manner of ending a sermon; and, generally speaking, a good sermon ends itself. Those are the best conclusions that make themselves, and that are not too long in the making. Joseph Hall, in his preface to his Virtues and Vices, says, "I desired not to say all that might be said, but enough." The famous Dr. Barrow, after preaching three mortal hours, was finally blown down by the organ's setting up to play; and old Thomas Fuller gives an amusing account of an Augustine friar who came to an end more summarily still. He says that the friar "bellowed so loud that he lost his argument, conscience, and voice, at once and together."

1. *Recapitulation*. This can be borne only by a decidedly argumentative discussion, and it is borrowed from forensic address. That kind of recapitulation often increases the power of a discourse by compressing its substance into a small space. It likewise strengthens the whole argument,

by binding up weak and strong arguments together, giving an impression of finish and strength to the whole. It serves, above all, to aid the memory, and it is addressed to the intellect more than the feelings. The recapitulation should be, (*a.*) *rapid and clear*[1] — a bird's eye glance. There should be nothing stiff, formal, and statistical in the recapitulation; its design, in addition to assisting the memory, is to concentrate the force of the separate heads of argument into one, thus preparing the way to the application. (*b.*) *It should not repeat arguments in precisely the same language as that employed in the body of the sermon*, but should be cast in a fresh form. (*c.*) It is sometimes effective to *vary the order of the arguments* themselves, generally by arranging them in a climactic order. (*d.*) The recapitulation should have *certainty and confidence of tone.* It supposes that the truths enumerated have been proved and settled; that they have come out from the vague and contradictory condition of the beginning of the sermon into distinct and established shapes.

As has been hinted, recapitulation is not always desirable, particularly if one has nothing especial to recapitulate, if he has not preached a solid sermon, or if the ideas of the sermon have been ill digested and ill arranged. The recapitulation, in some instances, may be made during the progress of the discussion, in order to give a clearer view of the connection of parts while passing on, and to impress and gather up all the thoughts, so that at the close there is no need of any further mentioning of these. Above all, a recapitulation is inadmissible when the appeal to the feelings grows naturally out of the last topic discussed, or the last division introduced.

2. *Applicatory inferences and remarks.* "Inferences are logical deductions from the argument; remarks are natural

[1] Professor Phelps.

suggestions drawn from it."[1] Taken both together, they indicate the use which is made of the subject immediately after the discussion. They form a method of making the direct application of the arguments. Inferences may be made to bring out more clearly the symmetry of truth. Thus, after discussing the doctrine of moral evil in a series of inferences, one may show its deep relations to other and brighter doctrines of the gospel, and may thus take a broad and rapid sweep from the basis of the discussion, around the whole circle of related truth. Inferences may also conduce to unexpected, powerful impressions. After thoroughly discussing a topic, we may in an inference suddenly open a hidden relation in an entirely different direction; and this may have been deliberately prepared for during the whole sermon. The mine may have been silently dug under the citadel of the unbelieving heart. Inferences should not, however, be suffered to destroy the unity of the discourse; and this is their tendency, which is to be carefully guarded against. Rather than do this, they had better be left out altogether.

As to *rules for inferences:* —

1. *They should be drawn directly from the whole character and development of the sermon.* Thus in the argumentative sermon, after we have given the hearers a view of the proofs, we may in the application bring home the truth that has been proved, more particularly to the hearers' own minds; we follow out the same design we have heretofore pursued.

In the expository sermon, we may close with the uses and lessons we have gained, as applied to the different conditions of our hearers. In the persuasive sermon, there should be at the end a more close application of the motives as directed to the particular action to which we would persuade men.[2] Thus the subject and our own particular aim in its

[1] Professor Phelps. [2] Day's Art of Discourse, p. 207.

discussion should shape the character of the inferences. They should be parts of the body of the sermon; they should bear the stamp of their common origin, and belong to the same family of thoughts and ideas. There may be sometimes an exception to this rule, when the whole discussion of a subject is intended to be only subsidiary to a different application of the subject. Thus, in a biographical discourse, after one has set forth the virtues and character of an individual — in the conclusion, he may enforce some one or more moral truths, that have been livingly exemplified. So, too, the explanation, in the body of a sermon, of a certain truth, may be subservient to the setting forth of some other nearly-related truth; or it may show a personal duty, or may lead to a distinct self application, or self-examination. An argument upon a truth may lead to the conviction of a duty; indeed, whatever the character of a sermon is, the use of it in the conclusion should be persuasive.[1]

2. *They should be forcible, and drawn from the body of the sermon;* i. e., they should not be feeble or frivolous inferences; and they should not be all the inferences that could possibly be drawn from a subject. There should be weight and freshness in them. In the application, we go beyond the bare general truth of our subject, and present those forcible conclusions which are to persuade our hearers in particular. Inferences may be drawn from other inferences, if they are still in harmony with the general discussion, and if they grow out of it.

As has been said, there may possibly be cases where the inference is entirely aside from the definite subject of the sermon — thus, a lesson to the impenitent may follow a sermon addressed to believers. This kind of side-issue, or divergent inference, should at least follow a discourse which abounds in solid thought, which carries all before it,

[1] Dr. Fitch.

and which makes room for itself to send its messages in every direction. As a general rule, it is more forcible to make, in the conclusion, a final concentration upon one point which has been more widely discussed and illustrated in the body of the sermon, rather than to make a final diffusion of thought, or widening out of the discussion into general remarks.

Dr. Fitch says that it is best always to make the application of the whole subject, and not of the particular thoughts. Build the fortification as nicely and elaborately, piece by piece, as you may, and then fire from it. Subjects, however, differ. Some lead irresistibly to broad and universal conclusions, especially those which relate to the nature of God.

3. *They should have regard to the character and states of mind of the hearers*, as well as to the character and design of the subject; e. g., when the hearer is reasonably supposed to be persuaded of the truth or necessity of a certain duty, he should then be told how to perform that duty, and should be helped to overcome its difficulties. You do not wish so much to add anything more to convince him, as to aid in doing the thing of which he is presumed to be already persuaded. Christians and unbelievers, as they are in different states of mind, are to be differently addressed in the conclusion. Encouragements, alarms, hopes, fears, choices, affections, are different in each.

4. *They should increase in force and importance.* Remarks relating to truth or conviction should precede those respecting duty or persuasion.[1] And in persuasion we should address those first who are most favorably disposed, and therefore *ceteris paribus* we should address the converted before the unconverted.

5. *They should be free from stiffness, dulness, and monotonousness.* Never should those qualities appear in a conclusion, if they do anywhere else, as it is absolutely

[1] Dr. Fitch.

needful that there should be the variety, individuality, and vivid life in our concluding remarks.

Some preachers draw pretty much the same inferences from all subjects; but we had better make one bold, impressive, original inference, than a dozen that are commonplace. F. W. Robertson, though abounding in inferential remarks, rarely cast his conclusion into a set of formal inferences, but in closing usually made one strong remark, one unexpected deduction, driven with tremendous power by all that had gone before. Thus, in a sermon to men of wealth he says, "To conclude;" and in a few condensed words he pours out a burning torrent of rebuke upon the clergy of England for their flattery of men of wealth, and their cowardly apologizing for the vices of the rich. Such a sermon was not forgotten. It left an ineffaceable impression on the conscience of those persons it was meant to reach.

Doddridge says that the conclusion of a sermon should be striking. Massillon sometimes closed with a supplication. Each remark of a conclusion should rise in power, should be free and untrammelled, and often abrupt as a thunder-peal, smiting the conscience with terror.

Dr. Fitch says, that in the application there is more occasion for vehemence and force than in any other part. Jonathan Edwards was inclined to be prolix in his conclusions; they were often more full of thought than feeling.

3. *Appeal to the feelings.* There are usually three modes of ending a sermon: (*a.*) In the *form of a series of inferences* as just suggested; (*b.*) In the form of *detached observations* following generally biographical and historical subjects; (*c.*) In the form of *direct address or appeal*, which follow out the aim of the sermon, or are appended directly to the body of the discourse. In this direct address is generally the place for the appeal to the feelings.

This address to the feelings is something above all art, and the more spontaneous and natural it is the better. That

is often the inspired moment of the discourse: it is inspired or not; it is real or artificial; it is everything or nothing. There should be true feeling in it, or the speaker should not attempt an appeal to the feelings of others.

1. *The whole sermon should be more or less arranged for the moral and emotional effect of the conclusion.* This should be unconsciously rather than artfully done. All should hasten to the end. One should begin the sermon with the end in view. He should strike the same chord at the end which he did at the beginning, though with tenfold force. If one has this aim to leave a deep and lasting impression on the heart of the hearers, pathetic and passionate thoughts will present themselves while he is composing the sermon. These should be remembered and gathered up for the conclusive appeal.

2. *The appeal should not be for rhetorical, but for true effect.* The conclusions of Demosthenes' and Æschines' orations "On the Crown" were introduced to cause in their hearers the feeling which the orators wished to create. Their banishment or triumph, their political life or death, depended on the result. They reserved their strong word for the last. They hurled it with all their force upon the hearts of their hearers. It was a real thing with them to succeed. It was no child's play. And has the preacher any smaller stake? Has he any less enduring crown in view? Should he himself have less feeling? Baxter says, in his Reformed Pastor, "I know not what others think, but for my own part, I am ashamed of my stupidity and wonder at myself that I deal not with my own and others' souls as one that looks for the great day of the Lord, and that I can have room for almost any other thoughts or words, and that such astonishing matters do not wholly absorb my mind. I marvel how I can preach of them slightly and coldly, and how I can let men alone in their sins, and that I do not go to them and beseech them, for the Lord's sake, to repent, however they take it, or whatever pains or trouble it should cost me. I seldom come out

of the pulpit but my conscience smites me that I have been no more serious and fervent in such a cause. It accuses me not so much for want of human ornaments and elegancy, but it asketh me, 'How couldst thou speak of life and death with such a heart?'"

3. *The appeal should not be overdrawn.* Hamlet's advice is still good; there should be a calmness, a self-possession, even in the very torrent and flow of the most pathetic appeal. One must control himself, to control his audience. He should not go before them in the manifestation of emotion. Pathos in the conclusion does not so much consist in a strained, high-pitched voice, or an agitated manner, or intense and harrowing language, as in a certain deepening of the tone of feeling, a concentration of thought, and a profound earnestness of the whole man. Sometimes a preacher must weep, and he would not have a true heart if he did not; but it were better for him not to weep. Yet if he cannot prevent tears, let them flow; Christ wept over Jerusalem. Restrained emotion is often more powerful than its expression. The appeal should be made to the spiritual sensibilities.

4. *All appeals to feeling should be brief.* Thus the most touching, the most direct remark one has to make, comes naturally, and it were better, spontaneously. It should be said in as simple and few words as possible. "Tears dry fast." Let nature's short road to the feelings be studied. A particular case, or a personal fact, is better than any more general observation, to touch the feelings. An apt allusion to some individual, or some circumstance, is more moving in the conclusion than the best philosophical generalizations. For the real close itself, so far as the feelings are concerned, nothing is more impressive and moving than a feeling, solemn passage of the Scripture, either the text or some other perhaps still more pointed word of Scripture. Then the sermon begins and ends with the word of God. The voice of God first breaks the silence, and after the voice

of man has been heard for a while, the voice of God comes again at the close; and if this is the warm expression of the love of the gospel, simple, genuine, pure; so much the more effective.

5. *An indirect appeal is often effective.* Men are jealous of appeals to their feelings; and perhaps the strongest appeal, after all, is so to construct the whole discourse as that it shall make its own appeal.

> "Of every noble work the silent part is best,
> Of all expression that which cannot be expressed."

We are more and more inclined to think that the conclusion of a sermon should not be highly wrought, but simple. This is the trial of the conclusion. If there is an appeal to the feelings, it should flow naturally from the last remark or thought of the sermon, rather than arouse a distinct expectation that now an appeal is to be made to the impenitent, to the young, to church members. This tends to deprive the conclusion of its effect. Sometimes the whole concluding appeal may be in a single sentence. This was peculiarly characteristic of Luther's "conclusions." A German writer says, "Luther did not lay great stress on the conclusion, and many of his sermons are without any recapitulation. He ends some of his sermons abruptly, with the words, 'Enough now has been said upon this scripture; let us call upon the grace of God.' In other discourses he simply, in conclusion, repeats the main thought of the last division of the discourse, and says, 'Have faith and love; abide in them; so you can have and do all this.' Or he closes with a wish: 'God grant that we also may comprehend;' or, 'God keep us, save us, and grant that we may earnestly hold to this teaching, so that we may not fall into shameful sin and reproach.'"[1]

Stereotyped forms of appeal — of direct appeal — to the

[1] C. Jonas, Die Kanzelberedsamkeit Luther's, p. 513.

unconverted, have lost much of their power. There is sometimes an impressiveness in leaving them off altogether. But it may possibly be that — the custom of direct appeal having fallen so much into disuse, and sermons having become so essayish and impersonal, and devoid of directness and point — a return now and then to the old method of direct appeal to the impenitent, at the close of the sermon, might, in some cases, be deeply effective. The conclusion of Whitefield's sermon on the "Kingdom of God" is an example of this kind of personal appeal. The great and only question is, How is the deepest impression to be made by a sermon? It certainly depends very much on the conclusion. The sermon has been compared to a river: it may be small at its beginning, but at its close, when it pours itself into the ocean, it should be the fullest in volume, the profoundest in depth, the most majestic in movement, though, perhaps, at that very moment, it may be the calmest to all appearance, from the fact that it is pouring along its greatest volume. So the conclusion of a sermon on divine truth may be apparently the most tranquil part of the sermon; but that is, and should be, the tranquillity of the deepest feeling, of the fullest thought, of the most solemn and momentous truth; for it has then reached a point where it is about to mingle with the ocean of eternal life or death; it is "the savor of life unto life, or of death unto death;" the word has been spoken, and it returns to God; the conclusion may be calm, and even joyful, but it should be the calmness of earnest and solemn feeling.

As a suggestion in closing a sermon, let the preacher be *kind* in his words and manner even to the wickedest and worst. In the moment of the most solemn adjuration, or even burning rebuke and denunciation, let the tender affectionateness of the gospel glow. This personal appeal in all cases is difficult, and is often better to be indicated than actually made; but there should be, directly or indirectly, with boldness, but in love, a personal application of the ser-

mon; and there may be times when nothing else is suitable, or nothing will reach the point, excepting the words of Nathan to David, "*Thou art the man!*" Love in the heart will teach us, and it alone will teach us, how to reach the hearts of our sinful fellow-men.

Let the preacher keep in mind that the end of preaching is not preaching itself, but a lodgment of the renovating truth in the hearts of those who hear: in the language of Vinet, "God has purposed that man should be the channel of truth to man. Not only are words to be transmitted and repeated; *a life is to be communicated.*"

PART SECOND.

RHETORIC APPLIED TO PREACHING.

FIRST DIVISION.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC.

§ 18. *Definition of Rhetoric.*

Rhetoric was formerly an absorbing study in schools of learning when they were more truly theological schools than they now are, and in ancient times it comprised the full half of education; but we are now simply to discuss some of the uses of rhetoric *as applied to preaching* — its advantages in enabling the preacher to master and methodize truth, so as to present it with the most power to the minds of men, that they may more readily grasp it, and that it may, by God's blessing, produce immediate and lasting results.

As it is needful, for this purpose, that the preacher should make use of his *natural powers;* as he must call into exercise his reason and persuasive faculties; as he must avail himself of the laws of mental science and the capacities of human speech, just as he does in conveying any natural truth to the mind, — it thus becomes essential for him to understand those universal principles of persuasion, and those laws of thoughtful discourse, which form in themselves an important subject of inquiry, and mark a definite science.

Great minds in the past have carefully thought, observed, and labored upon this subject; for the power of *eloquence* has always been one of the most wonderful facts in man's history, and the results of their observation and thought, especially in the land of Greece, where eloquence arose and flourished as upon its native soil, were gathered up under the general name, or department, of rhetoric.

The word "rhetoric" is derived from ῥήτωρ, a speaker, or orator (from stem ῥε, to speak, seen in the fut. ἐρῶ, I will speak). This primary meaning of the word should not be lost sight of in considering the true scope and functions of the art of rhetoric; for it shows that the term was originally exclusively applied to the art of public speaking, or to a *spoken discourse.*

Before endeavoring to define what true rhetoric is, let us notice some of the leading ideas which have prevailed concerning it. (1.) *Ancient ideas of rhetoric.* These are represented principally by Aristotle and Plato. *Aristotle* confined rhetoric almost entirely to the art of public speaking. In accordance with the genius of the free Greek state, where every citizen was an independent, thinking, and governing power, and the state was chiefly composed of the voting citizens who resided in the city, and could thus be reached and swayed by the public orator; the popular deliberative assembly, in which the civil leader, or counsellor, could come directly in contact with the popular mind, was the great field for the practice of the rhetorical art. This art formed one of the chief means of obtaining mastery over men — of the science of politics. It therefore became associated with the arts, managements, and sophistries, of political leaders, and began to be looked upon with suspicion, as meaning something in itself artful, or artificial.

Aristotle regarded it wholly as an *instrumental* art; as a means of mastery; as a means to an end. If he regarded virtue and truth as true rhetorical forces, yet he looked

upon them as but secondary or incidental elements in the dynamics of rhetoric. Rhetoric he looked on as the art of proving. It was with him almost identical with logic, or reasoning. Whatever would enable one to carry his point, to gain the victory, came under the faculty of "'Ρητορική." The end of rhetoric, with Aristotle, was *persuasion*. He called it "*a faculty of considering all the possible means of persuasion on every subject.*"[1] It was thus, in his idea, an offshoot of *dialectics* and *politics*. It was wrestling with minds; the skilful and strenuous assault upon them, with every means of argument and persuasion, to subdue them. It was the art of making men believe as we would wish them to believe, and do as we would wish them to do. Every one might come, good or bad, and gather weapons from this art, and make himself a powerful man to carry his ends with the people. Aristotle's view thus gave the turn to the ancient idea of rhetoric, and it came to be looked upon as a species of dialectic skill that might be taught and acquired, by which the public mind could be influenced, and ambitious ends attained. By the dexterous use of words, plausible arguments, striking terms of speech, and tricks of delivery, the orator could lead the people at will. Aristotle admits, as has been said, that truth itself has an inherent rhetorical power, and he has something to say upon the ethical aspects of the art; but, if we mistake not, the view which has been given was, in the main, Aristotle's conception of rhetoric; and doubtless, in the technical sense of the term, he was correct — that rhetoric is the art of persuasion by public discourse.

Plato held higher views, and came very near the best modern conception of rhetoric. Under the name and sanction of Socrates, in various treatises, above all in the "Gorgias," Plato attacks the mere art or artifice of rhetoric, showing the unphilosophical and unprincipled character of

[1] Aristotle's Rhetoric, chap. ii., sec. 1.

the sophistic idea of rhetoric, as a mere art to win by; that if it were solely the application of means to an end, that end might be the basest imaginable, and the art of rhetoric might thus be wholly the art of deceiving and corrupting. This kind of rhetoric, founded on empirical rules, aiming at immediate success, and exalting the seeming over the true — Plato pronounced worthless. He proves, also, that it is no true art; that it is but a kind of skill or knack, like the boxer's art. After refuting this low idea of rhetoric, he gives his own conception of the orator; the true orator is shown to be the man who does not strive only for mastery, but who aims to build up truth and justice in the state, and to exalt himself by just means, and for the good of the people, and who, even if unsuccessful in carrying his point or in obtaining mastery, is nevertheless declared to be the true orator.

Cicero held the views of Aristotle, from whom he draws his own. He speaks of his own art with the enthusiasm and zeal of an orator, rather than with the conscientiousness of a philosopher.[1] He is even more intense than Aristotle in the idea of the purely instrumental character of rhetoric, and he applies oratory chiefly to the business of civil polity, and to the acquiring of mastery in that. He exults in it as an art of fence, or as a strong weapon not possessed by every one, and which is to be skilfully wielded for the purpose of self-defence, power, and conquest; he says, "What is so useful as at all times to bear about those weapons by which you can defend yourself, challenge the infamous, and, being wounded, revenge?"[2] Cicero was naturally cold in his disposition, and inclined to ornament for its own sake; and, though often affirming it, he nevertheless, in spirit, differed from the high Platonic or Socratic view, which made so much of the *moral* idea in rhetoric; and he conceded almost everything to outward grace, orna-

[1] De Oratore, B. II., c. viii. [2] Idem, B. I., c. viii.

ment, and attraction. "There may be many good speakers," he said, "but he alone is eloquent who can in a more admirable and noble manner amplify and adorn whatever subjects he chooses, and who embraces in thought and memory all the principles of everything relating to oratory."[1]

Quintilian's idea of the art of oratory was nearly the same as that held by Cicero, although he maintained, with much more emphasis than Cicero did, that eloquence was an ethical quality, and that the orator must be a *good* man.[2] His practical idea of rhetoric, however, was, that it is a means to an end, and that the end often justifies the means; and his brief definition of oratory is, "*the art of speaking well;*" affirming the great object and the ultimate end of oratory to be, "to speak well."[3]

(2.) *Modern ideas of rhetoric.* In considering these, we should not forget that ages have passed away, bringing great changes of manners and thought with them; that the enlargement of the means of popular address, and of the diffusion of ideas, chiefly through the press, has widened the field of rhetoric; and that the whole moral revolution which Christianity has wrought in the intellectual and social world has tended to elevate the conception of the rhetorical art. As one of the forces of the world, Christianity has claimed rhetoric, and permeated it with something of its own spirit, so that there is felt and acknowledged to be such a thing as Christian eloquence.

As to the actual *field* which the modern idea of rhetoric embraces, it has extended itself beyond the ancient limit, which was confined almost entirely to public speaking, or oratory, properly so called, and has taken in the art of *prose composition*, and even *some kinds of literature*, in addition to the art of public speaking. But it must have a limit. It cannot include all kinds of literature. It cannot include poetry, or philosophy, or science, strictly so

[1] De Oratore, B. I., c. xxi. [2] Quintilian's Institutes, B. II., c. xx.
[3] Quintilian's Institutes, B. II., c. xv.

called. It must confine itself to that species of literary composition which relates to the means of popular persuasion, and which belongs, directly or indirectly, to the business of the *public speaker*. It also legitimately includes all that literary and dialectic *training* which fits one to be powerful in speech, whether he speaks in the popular assembly, the court, or the pulpit. The education of the speaker or orator in these days comprehends, of course, a wider field than in the ancient days, especially if he is a preacher of the great truths of Christianity; yet, after all, the area of the rhetorical art, though enlarged, is essentially the same as of old. It continues to be in the main a formal science, having to do more exclusively with the regulation of the *form* and *method* of public speech than with the materials of thought or contents of speech. It is now, as then, the art of public speaking for the purpose of persuasion; and we would give the following as a definition of rhetoric, applying to ancient times as well as to the present: *Rhetoric is that art or science which has to do with the laws that regulate public speech; and it comprehends all that properly goes to make up the education, training, and true power of the public speaker.*

We have not attempted to give a definition of eloquence, but only of rhetoric, although rhetoric is, in a true sense, the art of eloquence. While there might be different views of what *eloquence* is, — one writer considering it to be simply the *power of persuasion;*[1] another, the *ability to utter strong emotions in an elevated and forceful manner;*[2] another, the *power of fluent and continuous expression;*[3] another, the *gift of the soul which makes one the master of the mind and heart of others*, and enables him to inspire them as he wills, or to move them to do what he pleases;[4]

[1] Professor Goodrich. [2] Dr. Webster.
[3] Professor H. N. Day, Elements of Rhetoric, p. 3.
[4] La Bruyère. Vinet's Homiletics, p. 22.

and another still, that it is the *power of sympathy in speech*, or of communicating thought and feeling by apprehending the condition of the hearer's mind, and by so chording in with his thought that a certain magnetic union of minds is evolved, in which the hearer's mind is penetrated with new life and power,[1] — whatever may be our idea of eloquence, and however rarely attained this effect which we call eloquence, no one, we presume, will find fault with the definition given of *rhetoric*, or, without disparaging his own intelligence, deny its use to the preacher. He who speaks must train himself for speaking; and whatever tends directly to give him power as a public speaker, whether it is the cultivation of the reasoning faculty, or the study of language and style, or even elocutionary discipline, is fairly included in the art of rhetoric.

But modern ideas have improved upon the ancient one more in their *intrinsic conception* of rhetoric than in the extent of its appropriate field; and yet it is wonderful how the ideas of Aristotle and Plato, who represent the two poles of the human intellect, continue to control the world of philosophy and art. Some modern writers on rhetoric incline to the lower Aristotelian view, that it is strictly an art of persuasion; that truth itself is but one of the means or forces of persuasion, and that rhetoric has little or nothing to do, intrinsically, with virtue or vice, truth or error: most writers, however, incline to the Platonic view, that rhetoric must have a *moral* groundwork; and Christianity deepens this moral idea of art, and makes acts of words — acts full of moral significance and choice.

Whately, in the structure of his mind, was an Aristotelian, although his purer morality and Christian culture served in many ways to modify and elevate his views; but he looks upon rhetoric, and logic also, as purely instrumental

[1] Vinet's Homiletics, p. 23.

arts, "though applicable to various kinds of subject-matter, which do not properly come under them."[1] The materials of thought, or the moral groundwork of the oration, he does not consider as belonging at all to rhetoric; but he confines rhetoric entirely to the method of employing these materials. It is the art of handling the tools, whatever the work may be. Rhetoric is the best way to persuade men to think as we do. Looking upon it in this light, he defines rhetoric to be "*the art of argumentative composition;*"[2] and his treatise is mostly taken up with discussing the mode of constructing an argument, so as effectually to subdue the reason, passion, and will. It is a good digest of rules upon the composition of arguments.

Theremin, a thorough Platonist, holds that, though rhetoric is an art, or something instrumental to the attainment of an end not in itself, and that, though it has to do with the form rather than the material about which it is employed, yet that it has a vital root in ethics, and that its subject-matter must always be τὸ ἀληθές — the truth. He terms eloquence — as did, indeed, Quintilian and some of the older writers — "a *virtue;*" and he regards it as directly springing from those moral qualities in the speaker and in the hearer which underlie the mere form or art of the speech itself. Every element of rhetoric, considering it to be the "art of eloquence," — such as the law of *adaptation*, the law of *progress*, the law of *vivacity*, &c., — he develops from some principle in the moral nature of man; which view certainly ennobles rhetorical studies, for it leads the speaker to look into himself for power, rather than to any acquired skill. That Theremin's view has some deep truth in it may be seen from the classic orators themselves, although they may have been built upon a shallower idea of their own art. It came out in their discourse, because as men they were greater than their theories. The moral power of Demosthenes was strikingly shown in his superi-

[1] Elements of Rhetoric, Monroe's ed., p. 20. [2] Idem, p. 21.

ority to the mere skill or artifice (however extraordinary) of his rival, Æschines. Supposing their intellectual acumen to have been the same, the arguments of Demosthenes were generally drawn from universal principles of truth and right, as they existed not only in himself, but in his hearers; therefore Demosthenes was the greater orator, and triumphed because truth and right were stronger powers than their opposites. Should rhetoric, or eloquence even, be considered as nothing more than an art, *that* does not alter the truth of the assertion that it must have an ethical foundation; for every true art must have this. Why has the art of sculpture, which is but the skill of a man to hew an inanimate block of stone into a certain shape, exerted such an influence on the world? Why have its great masters — Phidias, Michael Angelo, and Canova — been real powers? It is because they were great men themselves; and in their works they drew from the depths of their moral nature. Michael Angelo's colossal statue of Moses is a highly ethical work, representing the author's conception of the grandeur, unchangeableness, and majesty of the moral law. Feeling, intense reverence, deep meditation on the character of God, are combined in this production; it is unspoken eloquence. Eloquent speech, far more than such a dead art as sculpture, is something which must flow from the depths of the moral nature and character. As far as one is a true man, and is in agreement with the law of truth which rules man, and which is perfect in the mind of God, so far his speech will be the expression of the truth which is in him; if not, it is false eloquence and false rhetoric. If there is no depth to a man, no inward harmony with the truth, he cannot possibly be an eloquent man, though he may be a skilful and plausible pleader; for truth alone is eloquent, because it finds its correspondence in every man's conscience and heart, and because truth can be advocated and defended only by truth, in the spirit of truth.[1]

[1] Vinet's Homiletics, Skinner's trans., p. 25.

This more profound idea of eloquence is, above all, important to the preacher of divine truth, and it applies to him with a force that it has for no other public speaker. He must *be* what he speaks. He, at all events, is not one who speaks to catch the ear, or to produce a temporary sensation, he speaks to make the truth which is in him so vividly seen and so deeply felt by the hearer, that the hearer shall grasp it and make it an eternal possession. A thorough conviction of the truth and a genuine love of it, are the real sources of eloquence in the preacher. These are summed up in the single word *faith*, which includes both the divine gift and the human character. *Our real preaching power is our faith.* This was the eloquence of the apostles and of the first Christian preachers. 2 Cor. 4: 13, "*We believe, and therefore speak.*" This is what Dr. Bushnell calls "the faith-talent:" our speech should be the utterance of believing souls — the pure speech of the word speaking in us; and if the orator, according to Plato, must be a good man, how much more the preacher, according to Christ! Is not, indeed, the Christian preacher "*that great orator*" who, Quintilian said, "had not yet appeared, but who may hereafter, and who would be as consummate in goodness as in eloquence."[1]

Chrysostom severely censured the error of considering the preacher as a mere orator, and he reduced all the eloquence of preaching to this one object — *to please God.*[2] To speak God's will, "to minister in the spirit," requires an anointing from the Holy One. The New Testament is full of the application of this (as we think) truly rhetorical principle, that out of his own character, out of his inward union with the Spirit of truth, springs the preacher's power.

Dr. Bushnell, in his "God in Christ," has an eloquent passage upon the preacher, which ends thus: "The man is to be so united to God, so occupied and possessed by the eter-

[1] Instit., B. XII., c. 1. § 23. [2] Neander's Life of Chrysostom, p. 73.

nal life, that his acts and words shall be outgoings of a divine power. And exactly this Paul himself declares, when he says, 'And my speech and my preaching was not with persuasive words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' And this is the proper, the truly sublime conception of the minister of God. He is not a mere preacher, occupying some pulpit, as a stand of natural eloquence, but he is a man whose nature is possessed of God in such a manner that the light of God is seen in him; a man whose life and words are apodictic — a demonstration of the Spirit." These words fairly carry out what we conceive to be a true rhetorical principle, not, indeed, as regards common speakers, but the Christian preacher, viz., "that the preacher of Christ should be filled with the truth and spirit of Christ — should speak "*in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.*"

We end this discussion upon the idea and definition of rhetoric by saying that, although rhetoric must still be considered mainly as an art, or that it has to do with the form more than with the substance of speech, yet it is itself in harmony with and founded upon truth, and derives its power from the great laws and impulses of man's moral nature; it is a free, not a mechanical art. And this is especially true in the case of the preacher; and the principle in his case may be carried still higher, and the assertion may be made, that no man can be a genuine preacher of God's word who is not in some sense inspired by the Spirit of God. As to the question sometimes asked, *Is not rhetoric, after all, a merely mental power or skill*, which is afterward deepened by the judgment of the moral sense, or the acceptance by the moral sense of the purely intellectual conclusions of the mind? That may be true in the technical idea of rhetoric, but in the deeper view of it which we have endeavored to bring out, we would answer, no; for unless the whole being enters into and goes to make up the orator, his moral as well as intellectual powers, his spirit as well as understand-

ing, he cannot arrive at genuine convictions of truth; these convictions would not be truly his own, and thus they would not carry the weight with them of personal convictions. Eloquence is the breath and force of the man's personality. It is the whole being of a man speaking. Cicero said that "one might simulate philosophy, but not eloquence." Eloquence is something more than mere art; it lies in the depths of moral character. "*L'éloquence est en elle-même un trait du caractère plutôt qu'un don intellectuel.*" [1]

§ 19. *Uses and Sources of Rhetoric.*

Notwithstanding the noble utility of the rhetorical art, rightly understood, there are popular objections to the preacher's study of rhetoric, which it is worth while to consider. These objections may be comprised in some general statement like this: *The rules of rhetoric necessarily contain that which is wholly human and artificial, and they render the study of rhetoric unworthy of the simplicity of the preacher of divine truth, who depends on the truth itself, and on the Holy Spirit, for the true results of preaching.*

Even the true orator, it is said, is one who trusts more to *nature* than to art, and who has the least of art in his eloquence; and, *à fortiori*, how much more should this be the case with the preacher of divine truth!

In one sense the rules of rhetoric are artificial, because they concern the art of speaking; but they are not artificial in the common sense of the term, as meaning what is false. True rhetoric is drawn from truth and nature. It is the discovery of the genuine laws of persuasive speech among living men; and it is simply reducing these to definite principles. It is the study of the best ways which nature employs to communicate and impress truth. But it is answered, Why, then,

[1] Vinet's Histoire de la Prédication des Réformés, etc., p. 673.

make rules at all? Why not leave rhetoric to nature? This man and that man are *self-taught* orators, who never studied a volume on eloquence. The more rules, the less eloquence. It is true there are men of native eloquence, who have not studied the art in books; but they *have* in men, in nature, in themselves. This has been the case with many distinguished Methodist preachers; they have been keen students of the most effective use of motives and arguments, and even of gestures and tones, upon the passions. There is nothing artificial about that. That is nature's way; that is really seeking the truth and the true power of eloquent speech. It is true that the art of rhetoric will not make an uneloquent man eloquent; this is not the teacher's work, and is beyond his ability. Rhetoric will, however, make an effective speaker more effective, and will enable any man of good abilities to become a good writer and speaker. "If you suppose either to be independent of the other, nature will be able to do much without learning, but learning will be of no avail without the assistance of nature. But if they be united in equal points, I shall be inclined to think that, when both are but moderate, the influence of nature is nevertheless the greater; but finished orators, I consider, owe more to learning than to nature."[1]

Rhetoric will not furnish a man with thoughts, but it will teach a man how to use his thoughts; and a mind that will be killed by good rules of speaking and writing cannot be a strong mind, and such a mind would be made pedantic by any kind of knowledge.

It is possible that rhetorical studies will somewhat repress natural freedom, and there may be a sense of art or artificiality produced; but this must soon wear off when the study is rightly conducted, and when a man is resolved by every means to make himself an effective speaker. He will go through art into nature, and be all the stronger.

[1] Quintilian's Instit., B. II., c. 19.

And what, truly, should there be in this study, rightly conducted, to injure the simplicity of the preacher? This term "*simplicity*," as used in the New Testament, signifies "freedom from guile," and "singleness of heart and purpose," or, in a wider sense, "the unperverted teaching of the gospel," rather than intellectual simplicity or barrenness. The preacher's rhetorical study is to aid him to give the truth its true force, to clear it of what is false, and to present it in its real simplicity and strength to the mind. "The foolishness of preaching" is not "foolish preaching," but what was *esteemed* foolish by the Greeks, in opposition to their "wisdom," viz., "the preaching of the cross." It was not the preaching, but the subject of the preaching, that was foolish.

But, it may be said, if the preacher uses the aids of rhetoric, and strives to make himself an eloquent speaker, does he not put himself *on the same level with the platform-speaker?* The difference between the pulpit and platform is deeper than a mere rhetorical difference; for the preacher may use all the art and skill that the platform-speaker does, and still be a preacher and not a platform-orator. The great difference between the two is, that the eloquence of the platform-speaker ends in itself: he has shown his power, or he has gained his point; but the eloquence of the preacher ends in the good and salvation of his hearers; it is no merely personal or temporary object. The platform-speaker strives for the present mastery, amusement, instruction, or conviction of his hearers, and human powers and eloquence are sufficient for the production of *that* effect; but the aim of the true preacher is something out of himself, something enduring and eternal. He needs more than his own powers for this; he needs something more than human eloquence.

But if the preacher needs something more than human eloquence, he still may not despise anything that will make him more effective as a preacher. Nathan's preaching to David was a piece of pure rhetoric. It was the polished arrow that slew the king's sin, and saved his soul from its

deadly coil. Paul's use of the illustration of the Athenian altar was a skilful use of the law of *adaptation* in rhetoric; and did it injure the moral simplicity of his speaking? Apollos was, undoubtedly, well trained in the rhetorical schools of Alexandria.[1]

Upham has some interesting remarks upon the proofs that our blessed Saviour himself valued mental culture, and in his human nature prepared himself for the work of his ministry by thought and study of the Hebrew Scriptures.[2]

As to the most important bearing of the objection in regard *to the converting power of divine truth accompanied by the Holy Spirit*, that certainly does apply in full force to all *false* ideas of preaching, where the human element is made prominent, and the divine element is made subordinate, or is lost sight of; and yet the fact of the converting power of divine truth, or that all renewing power is in God alone, does not do away with the value of human preaching. "*I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.*" The real power — the ultimate power — is in the divine causation, yet the human instrumentality is not excluded. It is true that if God does not aid the preacher, his best efforts are vain; and if God also does not animate and fill with his spirit the organization of the church, the church is a useless body; yet this is not saying that the preacher and the church are not needed, and that these agencies may not, and should not, put forth all the effort, talent, and power *they* possess, relying on divine aid. If one should carry the objection to an unreasonable extent, then human agency in the conversion of men would be excluded, and all means employed for men's salvation — prayer as well as preaching — would be vain. This has been the theory of some who have pushed their views to an extravagant pitch. In the New England theological controversy

[1] Conybeare and Howson's Life of St. Paul, v. ii., p. 6.

[2] Interior Life, p. 243.

on "the means of grace," half a century since, it was asserted on the one side that the text "*Consider thy ways*" was addressed to every man as a rational and moral being, who must think upon his duty before he did it; on the other side it was regarded as a thing impossible, or, at least, inadmissible, for an impenitent sinner to consider his ways, because his thoughts would be depraved, and only depraved, continually, and no benefit, but only evil, would come of it. But human effort in the line of truth and duty, and for the furtherance and proclamation of the truth, is clearly set forth in the Scriptures. Not only did the apostles preach, but the Seventy, and others who were not endowed with miraculous gifts, and all believers, are to preach, in one sense. If we object to preaching, we might object to all kinds of influence exerted to promote religion, and diffuse truth among men. And if we admit preaching, it should be the best—the best that our human powers, aided by culture and divine grace, and intent upon the building up of the kingdom of God in the world, can produce. The simplicity of truth, and its converting power, are destroyed, not by its running through the human medium, but by its deliberate falsification, for selfish and earthly ends. As one is not defiled by eating with unwashen hands, but is defiled by having an unclean heart, so the truth is not corrupted by being taken into sinful human hands, and thus dispensed; but it *is* corrupted by passing through an unbelieving and false mind. And the simplicity of the truth may be also injured by the preacher's trusting to his *own eloquence* to produce conviction, and not to the word and Spirit of God. But no true preacher does this; for he considers the gift of God to be intrusted to an earthen vessel "*that the excellence of the glory may be of God, and not of man.*" He trusts wholly to the divine spirit.

What, then, to the preacher of divine truth, are some of the legitimate *uses of rhetoric?*

1. *It prevents the waste of mental energy.*

Many preachers, though fertile in thought, are troubled in arranging their materials. They are apt to go over too much ground. Their ideas are not sufficiently compacted; they are ineffectively marshalled, making a mob, and not an army. Their sermons often are theological treatises, small books. They waste their mental store, and do not get a due return for their outlay. Rhetoric teaches how to husband our resources; how to methodize and condense; how to make the most of what we have; how to say enough upon a subject, and to say it most forcibly.

2. *It gives accuracy to logical processes.*

Rhetoric aids us to think, as well as to write. It helps one to become master of his mind and of his mental resources; to regulate his processes of thought; to start them readily from certain fixed centres, and to follow them along certain defined lines. The mind is invigorated by the study of rhetoric and logic. It acquires thereby a finer edge. A trained rhetorician who is also a logician (for the two should go together) will not be apt to lay hold of the wrong end or the tough end of a question first, but he will advance upon it with an increasing force and impetus, that carry him through its difficulties. A proper arrangement and method in thinking, aid one to think. No extent of knowledge or brilliancy of imagination can make up for inaccurate habits of thought. In order to write or speak well, one must first think well. He must know how to analyze, to resolve a subject into its parts, to search its depths. The preacher should have depth as well as breadth. He should aim first at *true* thinking, and then he will come to original thinking; for rhetoric, while it regulates thought, does not repress originality.

3. *It opens the power of language.*

The use of language is a fit study for the preacher, whose duty it is to interpret the meaning and force of the words chosen by the Holy Spirit to communicate truth. The Preacher "*sought to find out acceptable words.*" Language

is thought's instrument. By it we not only communicate light, but life, to other minds. Through language, soul acts on soul. A preacher should understand the hidden powers of language; and here, perhaps, is one of the failures of the modern pulpit. The old preachers, especially the old English divines, were men of vast learning, who knew and felt the force of language, and such preachers as Bunyan and Flavel, who were not scholars, yet had attained to extraordinary force and purity of idiomatic English. The sermons of Bishop Andrewes, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, are wonderful for their nervous Saxon English.

Rhetoric comprises the whole field of linguistic and literary criticism — the rich field of language, of the mighty power of words as the instrument of thought; and the most skilful and powerful use of language can be acquired only through the study of this wide and varied field.

4. *It increases the ability of the speaker to carry conviction to other minds.*

Whately makes a just observation when he says that true rhetoric is not "*an* art of producing conviction, but it is *the* art of doing so." It is finding out, not the best, but the *only* way by which conviction must be produced. It is, in Whately's language, "*investigating the causes of the success of all who do produce conviction in writing and speaking.*"[1]

5. *It prevents the preacher's usefulness from being destroyed by little things.*

Preachers of genuine zeal and good abilities are often hindered in their usefulness by some insignificant thing, of which the simplest rhetorical culture would make them aware. Inaptness or inversion of style, a grotesque or awkward delivery, an unfortunate gesture, a nasal twang, a dryness or dulness in the treatment of vital themes, — some *little* thing, which could be remedied, will keep a good and perhaps able man tied like a slave to the wheel all his life.

[1] Whately's Rhetoric, Intro., § 4.

Let us now consider some of the *sources of rhetoric*. They are threefold: *Nature*, *Good Models*, and *Books*.

1. *Nature*. The preacher may learn from a *child* the first principles of the laws of rhetoric; e. g., *directness*. A little child, in making his wants known, and in carrying his point, will use the most direct method. He will express his wish in the fewest words. He will employ the strongest argument or motive which he is capable of employing, and which (how often it happens!) *is* strong enough to carry his point. Where there is a pressure on the mind of the humblest and rudest person, there is often a vivid force in his way of expressing himself, which is eloquent. A poor woman who has five minutes allowed her at your door will make her case stand in the strongest light; for she will say nothing unessential, or will leave nothing unsaid; she will arrange her story (her oration) in a way fitted to produce instant conviction, arouse pity, and will gain her end.

Nature is to be studied in *men*. The words and arguments of men engaged in the common business of life, if they have less abstruse depth, have often more practical weight and point than those of the most highly educated men, in whose minds the varied and abstract relations of a given truth habitually present themselves. The expressions of such men have a rough, powerful rhetoric. General Sheridan's famous speech at the fight of Winchester was a thousand times more effective than all the fine-turned sentences that were ever elaborated. President Lincoln's address at Gettysburg is a noble example of the eloquent condensation of thought and sentiment there may be in brief and simple language. The man who is always living in books, and upon dead men's ideas, should strive to catch something of this homely, vivid force of living men's every-day words and thoughts. Above all, he should study his *own nature*, as a source of rhetorical knowledge and power. He should carefully watch his own mind, and observe how he is affected by the arguments of others, and by what kind

of arguments; what are the motives which move him most deeply and reach him most quickly; what forms of expression are most striking, and what most pathetic; he should ask himself how, when, and why he is most moved by the speaking of others, and what kind of speakers do most move him.

2. *Good models.* Living models are best, because they come nearest to nature. Some preachers frequent the courts, to study the most direct modes of persuasive reasoning; yet *their* best models are preachers. By a study of true models we tend imperceptibly to grow like them; as, if one should gaze half an hour every day upon the Apollo Belvedere, he would show it in the carriage of his head, and the new dignity which would be breathed into his whole mien. But in studying models, it is only the *general result* that should be aimed at, and not the minute, literal copy. "*Turpe etiam illud est, contentum esse id consequi quod imiteris.*"[1] Every one should jealously guard his individuality, and should diligently strive to retain *his natural style, that good thing, that native force or facility which belongs to him, only corrected of its faults, and enriched by good examples.* No orator or preacher, let him be the greatest, is indeed a perfect model for our imitation, or combines in himself all excellences; neither is any great orator or speaker, as Quintilian has truly said, *imitable* in those things — his genius, invention, force, facility — which especially make him great; for those things are inborn, individual, spiritual, and escape the power of all imitation.

One should not only read the sermons of the best preachers, but *study* them, analyze them, sentence by sentence and word by word, searching patiently, laboriously, determinedly, to come at their sources of power. It is a good plan to take a condensed writer like Bishop Butler, and, after reading a page two or three times, to rewrite it in our own language, and carefully note the differences in the two

[1] Quintilian's Inst., Lib. X., De Imitatione.

modes of expressing the same ideas. Thus we should experiment and experiment, till we catch something of the condensed energy of one, the perspicuity of another, the fire of another. And, not confining ourselves to the study of the best writers and speakers in our own profession, we may extend our critical reading to the historian, the poet, the orators of antiquity, and to all the fields of literature. The study of Shakspeare is a spring of endlessly fruitful suggestion in the art of composition. A young preacher might always have on hand some author, and especially religious author, of first-rate excellence, not only as regards matter, but style; for the formation of a clear, forcible style is a severe process; and as no man can learn to paint without a continual use of the brush, so no man can learn to write and speak well without a continual use of the pen.

3. *Books.* We have anticipated this source of rhetorical instruction and suggestion under the last head; but we refer now more particularly to books upon the special art of rhetoric and homiletics. There are four works among ancient authors that may be considered to form the head sources of the rhetorical art: *Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetic*, *Cicero De Oratore*, *Quintilian's Institutes*, *Horace's Ars Poetica*. The principles of eloquence and style, drawn originally from nature, and illustrated by the best examples of Greek and Roman oratory, are reduced by these writers, for the first time, and one might say for all time, to a science. Aristotle, highly condensed and obscurely elementary, plants the seeds which in Cicero and Quintilian bear ripe fruits; in fact, all that has been since taught on the subject of eloquence is but a reproduction or development of what those old authors say. The eloquence of the pulpit, however, presents a new field, which, though it draws from the common principle of rhetoric, has laws of its own that are derived from a higher source than human thought or wisdom. In addition to works on homiletics in various languages, there are especially the *sermons* of great preachers, which

represent the different types and epochs of preaching, in various languages, which form in themselves an ample field of homiletical literature and study. In addition to those of modern, or comparatively modern, times, there are the sermons of the ancient preachers of the Greek and Latin churches — the discourses of *Chrysostom*, *Basil*, *Gregory of Nazianzen*, *Gregory of Nyssa*, and *Cyril* among the Greeks, and of *Ambrose* and *Augustine* among the Latins. Five hundred and ninety-four sermons of Augustine are extant; and through their ancient garb of the Latin language, the fire and living soul of the true preacher of Christ still glow.

Whatever there is in philosophy and literature which has to do with the orator's power may be studied to advantage; but above all, let the young preacher strive to gain a thorough *homiletical* training, not trusting entirely to books or to the teacher, but availing himself of every suggestion, from every source, to improve himself in the art of preaching. And after all, the greatest source of rhetorical power and rhetorical training is speaking. Practice in preaching is the best way to make the good preacher. He who would hit the mark must shoot *at* the mark. He who would move men by preaching must preach so as to move them. He who would overcome the difficulties of preaching must meet them in the presence of living men, in the act of speaking, on the field where difficulties present themselves.

§ 20. *Use of Reasoning to the Preacher.*

So far as reasoning comes under the department of rhetoric (and Whately, we have seen, makes rhetoric to consist mainly of the art of reasoning, or to be identical with it); and inasmuch as logic, in the present enlarged conception of the term, is held to be the science of the laws of thought, and includes in it all the forms and methods of thinking, the true idea of our mental conceptions and judgments,

and the principles of right reasoning; it becomes essential to the preacher to consider this, or at least to be stimulated to the careful study of this manly science. We would aim only to indicate the importance of this study to the preacher, as a legitimate source of power.

Coleridge's definition of *reason* is useful and ennobling to the preacher, who has to deal with those truths which are comprehended through the exercise of the highest faculties. "*Reason is the power by which we are enabled to draw from particular and contingent appearances universal and necessary conclusions.*"[1]

As further explained, reason is the prime source of necessary and universal ideas — ideas which are above the phenomenal world of sense; it is, in fine, the faculty that deals with pure ideas, and it appeals to itself alone, to its own intuitions and judgments, as the substance and ground of ideas. It is thus, according to Coleridge, that faculty in man which rises above the sphere of the mere intellect judging by sense, or the logical understanding, and enables him to arrive at absolute truths.

Taking care not to let this transcendental definition of reason usurp the place of that higher teaching or inward communication of the Holy Spirit, by which alone we can *spiritually*, and thus truly, comprehend divine truth, we do indeed perceive that there is in man a higher nature, that transcends the mere logical intellect. It is a faculty which judges *à priori*, which is capable of grasping absolute ideas, and which, to a certain extent, possesses intuitive insight. In the world of faith, and in the discussion of Christian truth, this higher exercise of the reason is important, for Christianity is a *rational* religion; that is, it corresponds to those universal laws and principles of truth that raise themslves above change, that are common to rational intelligences, and that are fixed in the constitution

[1] Coleridge's Works, Shedd's ed., vol. i., p. 251, et al.

of things. We should not be afraid of reason—that is, of this higher conception of reason — in the things of faith. If reason alone cannot arrive at divine truth, or truly comprehend it, divine truth, nevertheless, speaks to the highest reason in man, and lets itself down, as far as it can, into its congenial and assimilated sphere. And as "the word," ὁ λόγος, of which the preacher is the servant and minister, is, above all, the *divine reason*, the preacher should know the place and functions of reason; for he cannot keep divine truth confined in the arena of the mere understanding; it will burst from human definitions and propositions; it will not abide the test of mere word-argument; it cannot be discovered by the syllogistic method. It may indeed be methodized and systematized, and thus more easily be grasped by the logical faculty; but it belongs rather to the sphere of "rationalized intellect," in which, through the power of holy contemplation, in communion with the mind and spirit of God, the truth is clearly known. And the preacher should endeavor to evoke this higher faculty of reason in the hearer. He should strive to show that there is no real conflict between faith and reason, but that the truths of faith, which belong to a world above the natural and sensuous, appeal to that power in man which apprehends rational and universal truths — truths eternal as God's nature. Such reasoning, therefore, as this, which calls into exercise the highest nature of man, is the prerogative of the preacher of divine truth. This is his noble province, peculiar to him. And in all lower kinds of reasoning, as it is commonly understood, in which the logical understanding may be chiefly employed, the preacher should never lose sight of the influence and the exercise of this higher power of the reason.

We would now say a few words upon some of the *uses of reasoning* to the preacher, regarding reasoning here in the ordinary sense of the term, as the method of persuasion

by proof, or argument. Of these uses in cultivating the reasoning faculties, the first we would mention is, —

(1.) *To give a knowledge of the powers and necessary laws of the mind in thought.* Without some training in the art of thinking, one could hardly presume to be a public teacher or speaker. The preacher should know how to think. He should know what thought is, as far as it can be known, both in its origin, in the cognitive faculties of intuition, perception, imagination, and in its evolution through the elaborative or discursive faculties. He should have some clear idea of the formation of distinct judgments, out of the region of consciousness. Then, having gained the *materials* of thought, he should know how to build upon them, by following out the laws of logical method, and step by step, through new identifications and comparisons of relations, he should arrive at higher and wider results. He should understand *the laws of reasoning*, by which, whether through the briefer method of inference, or the more complex one of syllogistic reasoning, certain products are reached. Thought, while free, yet has its laws, which are as invariable as the laws of the physical world. It is by walking in the narrow way, that, intellectually speaking, we come into the kingdom of truth. A man may have transient perceptions of truth, and brilliant, though vague intuitions; but he can make little sure progress in the investigation and discovery of truth, unless he is able from one clear judgment of the mind, or two distinct judgments, to evolve, by a movement of thought, a new though commonly related judgment; and this is the simple process of reasoning. We cannot enter into the subject; but, as preachers and reasoners, we should acquaint ourselves with the names and processes of the science of reasoning, for its very names and forms are intimately connected with its processes. We thus gain a clearer idea of the great laws of thought, and through thought we verify and build up truth. Using it as an instrument, we go forth into the fields of the

physical and spiritual world, and construct systems out of the materials they furnish. In this way alone we can intelligently teach truth; and the preacher is, above all, a *teacher*. We would add, under this head, a word as to the two simple and fundamental principles of all thinking, and into which all true reasoning resolves itself, namely, *analysis* and *synthesis*. (*a.*) *Analysis*. This process is that of a whole to a part. It reduces a truth to its elements, proving separately its different terms and conclusions, and examining its groundwork and foundations. This is always an intensely interesting process to the human mind, and to the common mind. There will always be eager listeners to a preacher who takes a truth, even so repulsive a truth as that of human sinfulness, and analyzes it with power and skill, and who thus gradually leads the mind from the outward to the inward truth, from the abstract statement to the concrete substance, and from the nature of sin itself to the nature of the human act of sin, and all that it involves and bears along with it. A preacher who has not disciplined his mind to this analyzing process is always liable to be tripped up by some strong-minded reasoner in his congregation. His proposition is declared to be an apparent, and not true, conclusion from his premises, or his argument totally fails to touch this or that objection which reaches down deeper still. (*b.*) *Synthesis*. This process is that from a part to a whole. It divides off, or draws off, separately, that point of agreement in several objects which we can designate by some common term. Thus, gradually, some general fact, or general principle, which belongs in common to all these objects, or classes of objects, may be eliminated, and higher and higher levels of truth, more and more nearly approaching the nature of pure laws, or *à priori* truths, may be arrived at. This is a great power in a preacher, and lifts him at once above the level of those men who can never rise out of a circle of conventional ideas, nor venture upon new and independent views of truth; whose stock in trade con-

sists entirely of the conclusions of other minds. The moving power of reasoning depends mainly upon this power of generalization, of rising from one conclusion to another, and bearing along the mind of the hearer in a living and commanding process of argumentation, in which truth is made to develop its grander forces and its wider circles of thought and proof. Nothing is more useful than this power of generalization to a preacher who derives his themes of instruction from the word of God; who must, for the purposes of instruction, or in order to give unity to his instruction, seek to devise out of various members and parts of a passage, one truth, one main lesson, one clear proposition, which he is to illustrate and enforce.

(2.) *To develop truth in an orderly manner.* Truth is orderly. Being the child of the supreme reason, truth must have an essential order, and certain unalterable proportions, which, if destroyed or disarranged, cease to have power. The gospel is a system of truth going out from a living centre, governed by one law of development, and wonderful in its adaptation to the human mind. It is bringing the infinite into the bounds of the finite. In order, therefore, that it may have its full influence and transforming power upon the mind, it should be made to stand before the mind in something of its original symmetry. The basis of all true preaching, or sermonizing, is this deeply-meditated and orderly development of Christian truth. The subject-matter of edifying and instructive preaching is the thorough discussion of those great principles of truth in their real harmony of proportions, which, taken together, form the body of Christian doctrine. This kind of thoughtful reasoning must constitute what has been called "*the spinal column*" of every true sermon. Other things are adjuncts; but here is the bone and substance of preaching. Compact, orderly discussion should occupy the main body of almost every discourse from the pulpit. "It is order," Vinet says, "which constitutes discourse. The difference between a common

orator and an eloquent man is often nothing but a difference in respect to disposition." This "*lucidus ordo*," this true method in discourse, is essential to the teacher of truth. Method aids us to arrive at the end at which we aim, by applying the principles of the true development of thought to the investigation and confirmation of truth. The materials of truth, derived from the higher intuitions of reason, the phenomena of consciousness, the observations of the senses, and the evidence of testimony, especially that of the Scriptures, are organized, verified, and established, through the laws of methodical reasoning. Thus we do not compose vaguely, which is composing without thought. We do not snatch up slight impressions or suggestions, and discuss them without grasp or depth; but by the application of true principles of definition, division, and reasoning, we verify our knowledge of the Scriptures, arrange and dispose it in a clear method; and we are thus able to teach it; for "one does not really know a truth until he can teach it."

While divine truth does not depend upon any process of reasoning, but upon direct revelation, and upon the teaching of God's spirit to the heart, yet by the tests and criteria of inductive reasoning, hypothesis, analogy, and the last analyses and relations of truth, its harmonies are brought out, its groundwork is laid bare, and it is presented to the mind in such a way that the reason bows, and the conscience is convicted. Great preachers have been great reasoners; not, perhaps, all of them, in the scientific methods of strict logic, but in the clear development of the foundation principles of doctrine, and in that method of persuasion which the heart teaches to the true preacher. Jonathan Edwards reasoned so forcibly that his hearers thought God was speaking to them through him, as, indeed, he was; for he grasped fundamental principles, and so entered into them, that while he himself was hidden, he shook the consciences of men by the pure power of truth. A greater than Edwards, or than

Calvin, among human preachers, was the apostle Paul, who was, above all, a reasoner. "*He reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come.*" He was, according to the pagan Longinus, a dialectician of the first order. He convinced the reason and carried the heart. He was not a dogmatic reasoner, or a mere logician and "*doctrinaire*," but he appealed to received principles of reasoning, to arguments that had a universal applicability, and to eternal truths in the constitution of his hearers' minds. He did not ask them to believe anything which he did not show them to be right, and which, therefore, ought to be believed, and which he himself believed. How fundamental were the great themes of his preaching, reaching to those questions which enter into the nature of God and the divine origin of man — predestination and election, the corruption of human nature by sin, grace and the atonement, justification by faith and sanctification by the Holy Spirit, the building up of the soul in a holy life, and the spiritual kingdom of Christ! This kind of doctrinal preaching, dealing with fundamental truths, ribbed and clamped with manly argument, and filled with the breathings of the Spirit, and the warm affections of the heart, is a kind of preaching which is powerful, and which lasts. Argument forms the basis of interest with the popular mind, and it is the staple method of dealing with and influencing mind. Appeals to the feelings, and all kinds of "sensational preaching," soon wear out; but plain, sensible, and comprehensive reasoning, without the pedantry of the logician, or the hardness of the metaphysician, always has power with the great mass of common-sense, intelligent hearers. A sermon which has nothing of this element of thoughtful argumentation in it rarely makes an enduring impression, because it does not reach the depths of the subject, or the depths of the mind. It ruffles the top waves; it does not go down into the springs of thought or motive. A preacher should be able to treat of the fundamental nature of moral evidence, and to reason in a

forcible manner upon the subject of moral truth as related to human responsibility. No amount of fine writing, dazzling declamation, or even pathetic appeal, can atone for the absence of sound reasoning in a sermon. It need not, and should not, be technically theological, nor be continued wearisomely; but there can be little true eloquence without it. Truth, which is the converting agency, is not honored if it is not carefully developed, and if this thoughtful, orderly setting forth of truth do not form the basis of the sermon. This forms the *positive* element in preaching.

(3.) *To lodge truth firmly in men's minds.* Reasoning is not mere philosophy, which is the manifestation of the essential nature of things. But true reasoning is rather the manifestation or exhibition of truth for the purpose of immediate persuasion and practical good. A true preacher's reasoning aims to lodge truth in men's minds. Even logic, truly defined, is the method of directing the intellectual powers in the investigation of truth, and its communication to other minds. The last is as important as the first; it is the essential thing in true reasoning. While the preacher, then, may philosophize in reasoning, he cannot remain in philosophy, but must bring the truth out into the sphere of human responsibility. He should not be satisfied with merely demonstrating truth, but he should seek, as far as human powers can do this, to apply it to the human mind according to the laws of the mind; for if these laws be observed in reasoning, the truth *must* be accepted, at least intellectually, and this is a great thing gained. The principles of reasoning are the same in all minds. The process of producing conviction is the same, though there are immense differences in reasoning power. There is but one way by which the mind is convinced of the truth, and becomes subjected to it. And divine truth itself is not to be taken out of this category, though influences of a supernatural nature are *superadded*, for the purpose of awakening the dormant or dead energies of the mind. The Holy

Spirit is not given because we have not all the rational power needed to be convinced by the truth, but it is added because we will not use the power and receive the truth. We should do *our* best to convince men of the truth, and leave it to a higher power to bring their minds into a condition in which the truth will find firm lodgment in them, and work its work upon them; and the true reasoner will stand the best chance to do this. We may say that the burden of proof lies with the enemies of truth; nevertheless, the preacher cannot expect to reach men's minds, and permanently convince them, unless he sets truth before them in a clear manner.

(4.) *To expose and overcome error.* Error is perverted or wrongly reasoned truth — truth out of its right relations. It is built on some process of false reasoning, and, having the appearance of truth, it has more power to deceive. It may arise from a fault in the form of thinking, and thus be self-deceiving — the most subtly powerful of all error. This false reasoning, however, may be sometimes far too deep for the ordinary mind to detect. The Christian *heart* may detect it, but it cannot be thoroughly overthrown until its fallacy is discovered and exposed. This can be done only by the disciplined reasoner. Gibbon, Hume, Strauss, have rarely met their match as acute dialecticians; therefore their reasoning has continued to work mischief. Zealous but unskilful men have attacked them, and been foiled, and the public faith has been weakened. It would seem to be proved that the fierce discussions upon Hume's famous argument on "miracles" might have been saved if some contemporary theologian had been able to point out in a clear way, which admitted of no gainsaying, the fallacy contained in Hume's argument — that its middle term refers really to but a part, whereas his conclusion is made to refer to a whole[1] — an instance of what is called in logic "*illicit process.*" In other words, Hume falsely makes *some* testimony, which is weak

[1] Whately's Reasoning, Lesson IV., § 4.

and fallible, to stand for all testimony, which is not thus weak and fallible. The preacher should be boldly skilful to detect these fallacies of false reasoning. Many errors of the head might be put aside forever in a congregation, if the preacher understood the nature of true and false reasoning. Admit the Romish premises, and you must come to the Romish conclusion; admit the rationalistic premises, and you can land yourself in the depths of pantheism, and even atheism. When an error arises in a community, men honor a courageous assault made upon it by fair argument, rather than an attempt to put it down in a dogmatic, unreasoning way; it will thrive under this latter treatment. A preacher of Christ has, at some time, to buckle on the armor of controversy, and meet error in manful conflict. He must sometimes fight it out, as Paul tells Timothy to do in respect to the false teachers of Ephesus; and by the clear "*manifestation of the truth*," he will commend himself and his cause to all.

(5.) *To enable him to employ the fit argument.* We need not say that all arguments should not be used at all times. Before some audiences it would be better to employ the *indirect* argument than an argument where the conclusion is apparent. Dr. Emmons was famous for his "*ratio obliqua*," which oftentimes was brought to bear with sudden and irresistible power. He is, however, not to be followed too closely in that, for that art, if commonly used, would seem to imply something like craft. In proving a certain proposition, or form of truth, the "*à priori argument*," or the method of deductive reasoning from generals to particulars, where certain generic truths are taken for the premises, and then we reason to individuals or particulars contained under them, may be the most forcible method. Reasoning upon the nature of God admits of the highest and most constant use of this kind of argument. Indeed, the preacher is called upon to use this argument almost continually, from the fact that he preaches to interpret and enforce

divine revelation, instead of being called upon, as the scientific man is, to arrive at new truth by the system of inductive reasoning.

Sometimes it is best to reason to an *announced* conclusion, where demonstrative truth is impossible. This tentative process, when conducted on true principles, and not carried into the extremes of theoretical reasoning, is often interesting and awakening; it leads to original investigations and fresh views of divine truth. Oftentimes, on the other hand, without naming our proposition, it is the most effective plan to reason downward toward an *unannounced* conclusion, arriving at it as if led by the very force of truth, and not from any prearranged and controlling proposition.

A strong argument is made by reasoning from the principle of *expansion;* as, for example, that of Young, in his Christ in History. He argues from the admitted facts of our Lord's life on earth, taking the most natural and lowest view of them — facts which present to men the simple *manhood* of Jesus; from these his argument rises and leads on to the irresistible conclusion that such words, such works, such facts, such a character, can be predicated only of a divine being, of one who in the constitution of his nature was one with God. The argument from *contraries* is sometimes the only efficient argument; for the truth of some propositions can be established only by proving their opposites to be untrue; for of two opposites, both cannot be true, and if one be false, the other must be true. The argument from *analogy* is particularly useful to the preacher, but is, nevertheless, extremely difficult to handle with effect; and one may easily overdo it, and injure his cause. A false analogy is very seductive and very injurious. Because, it is sometimes said, a cultivated garden always brings forth good fruits, therefore a cultivated mind always produces good fruits, and education is thus the universal panacea of all evils — certainly a false conclusion. Analogy is often a strong argument, but it is not, and cannot be, a

wholly demonstrative argument; even Bishop Butler's argument is not claimed to be conclusive. It may be as strong in its moral impression as a demonstrative argument, and even stronger; but it is, after all, greater in its negative than in its positive force. Employed in the more common methods of illustrative reasoning, the argument of analogy is of exceeding value to the preacher in imparting a living force to his preaching; and that kind of reasoning makes the natural world an organ to play upon, and from it may be drawn harmonies and accords the most unexpected, powerful, and delightful.

The arguments, too, from *relation*, *omission*, *experience*, *testimony*, *probability*, may be wielded with effect, if they are employed at the right time and in the right place. What is required in an argument is simply to present the truth in as strong and clear a light as one can, so as to give all possible satisfaction to every mind in the audience. We are required, therefore, to study the particular case before us, the nature of the truth to be established, the end to be gained, the quality of the audience, and to adapt the reasoning to the circumstances of the theme and occasion, so that we may be "*workmen that need not to be ashamed.*"

(6.) *To produce persuasion.* We mean by this something over and above what has been said of developing truth and lodging it in the mind. We mean effecting a change in the mind and act of the hearer. We mean not merely to convince, not merely to move, but *to move to act.* Paul and the early preachers did not leave men quaking under the law, but led them to Christ: "*knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.*" This was old Latimer's way of preaching. He was earnest, as he said in his own words, "in casting down the people with the law, and with the threatenings of God for sin; not forgetting *to ridge them up again with the gospel* and the promises of God's favor."[1]

Persuasion, according to Whately, depends on the con-

[1] Graham on Preaching and Popular Education, p. 54.

viction of the understanding, the influencing of the will, and the moving of the feelings. Now, it is evident that no exhortation, nor brilliant writing, can do this, without, first of all, some clear exhibition of truth, which appeals to the reason, presents a motive to the will, and acts as an impulse to the feelings. Feeling does not move at the mere voice of command. It is jealous of authority — it refuses to be tampered with. The road to it is indirect, and often exceedingly circuitous. The persuasion which finally seizes upon and moves the whole being is no immediate result. When the Athenians started up and cried, "To arms!" it was after one of Demosthenes' most exhaustive and labored efforts of reasoning. The depths of the nature must be slowly aroused and heated, before the whole soul — so to speak — flows forth under persuasion. The understanding must hand its verdict to the will, and the will must communicate its impulse to the affections, and then the whole awakened mind yields itself freely to the truth, and says, "I believe and I will do." As has been said in regard to divine truth, the essential and peculiar nature of divine truth should not be lost sight of — that it is in itself pure and simple, the converting instrumentality; or rather that it is accompanied by the special power of the Holy Spirit. We can add nothing to the truth. "*The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.*" All is dry light without God's living energy. That inner persuasion of truth which imparts new life to the nature, springs from above.

We add some *cautions* to the preacher in the use of reasoning. (*a.*) *He should not rely wholly upon it for success.* We have endeavored carefully to guard against this. The nature of the corrupted human heart and the nature of divine truth — in a word, the presence of sin and the need of a higher power — forbid this. The preacher of Christ is the agent of producing not only persuasion, but life. He is not only, by means of the truth, to bring men into a new

opinion, but into a new disposition. He must have God's help for this. Yet the truth is the instrument of this great work. An eminent American preacher has said that "ministers should not always be talking about the truth — the truth. They should preach and think more of the life." We agree with the sentiment that was probably meant to be conveyed by that remark, yet there is a latent fallacy in it; for divine truth differs from common truth inasmuch as it is itself potential with life: "*My words, they are spirit and they are life.*" They are not the mere food of the intellect, they nourish the soul into everlasting life. We know of no way of producing new spiritual life, excepting through the bringing home of divine truth to men's minds and hearts, and, through their honest reception of it, into the currents of life. This further inward assimilating and life-giving process of the truth is hidden and mysterious to us; yes, more so than the processes of our natural life; but our duty as preachers is plain: we should present and enforce the truth in the clearest, most powerful and most persuasive manner that we are capable of. "*Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*"

That is invariably the divine method; and it is beautifully consonant to the laws of the mind. We come to the conclusion, that reasoning, while it has a real value to the preacher, is insufficient for the highest practical results: these depend upon other factors. God, and the things of God, in their deepest and truest meanings, do not lie in the domain of reasoning; they are to be reached, if at all, through faith, feeling, obedience, love — often by not seeking to prove or define them. The preacher should, therefore, beware of dogmatizing upon themes of a higher sphere, and should keep himself to the simple language of faith; he should choose to be vague, rather than to attempt to confine infinite things in logical formulas. One may, indeed, sin as much through argumentative preaching, as through sensational preaching. The preacher should speak on heavenly themes

as a child, rather than as a geometrician. His reasoning, should it ever assume an entirely abstract form, separates himself and his theme from the living sympathies of his hearers. Preaching *must* reach the people, or it is vain, dead, worse than dead. (*b.*) *He should not be a mere reasoner.* Reasoning is by no means all that a sermon needs. It should have literary attractiveness, spiritual insight, and above all, heart, love, life, faith, unction. Some kinds of sermons do not even admit of much close reasoning. And reasoning in sermons should not end in demonstration, but should be aimed at the conscience, will, and heart. Dr. Wayland, for example, had a logical mind, and used the logical method in preaching; but his hearers thought little of the logic, because his sermons were practical, and were pointed directly to the heart and life. It is not always practicable, nor always best, to make the direct appeal; but no sermon should be left to stand merely as an argument, exciting respect or applause, and carrying conviction to the head; but the hearers should perceive that the preacher cares nothing about the argument, *as* an argument, and that he is preaching to bring them to God and eternal life. The preacher should not leave himself, or the merit of *his* work, in the mind of the hearer, but Christ and his work, Christ and his love. His hearers will get accustomed to the most terrifying doctrines, if they see that the preacher, in his treatment of them, means nothing more than the display of his dialectic skill and partisan orthodoxy. This kind of preaching has been sometimes carried so far, that it has emptied churches and driven away the Spirit of God. Paul warned Timothy against this very thing, and bade him not dwell upon subjects "*which minister questions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith;*" and to preach, "*not himself, but Christ Jesus the Lord.*" The preacher and his sermon are of comparatively little importance. They have accomplished their task, if, by God's grace, they bring men to the feet of Jesus. Has a sermon an amazingly rending power? Like a

shell that has done its work, the most powerful sermon, the most faithful argument, after it has sped to its mark, is but worthless iron.

We would desire, in closing this theme, to repeat the warning against too high expectations concerning the productive power of the logical method in the investigation of divine truth. Insight and simple consciousness, the exercise of the higher reason, above all, faith and obedience, are the chief productive elements in the discovery and inculcation of truth. In religious things, the intuitions of the heart are better than the conclusions of the intellect. No man is converted by reasoning, but he is by love — the love of God as manifested in Christ.

§ 21. *The Study of Language.*

Whatever may be our theory in regard to the origin of language, whether it be natural or divine, it is assuredly the divinely ordained and inevitable expression of that spirit in man which allies him to God. Man was originally created with the capacity and instinct of language; i. e., with the organs of speech and the ability to use these organs to express his thoughts; and the effort to do this, or the process of doing it, was the origin of language. What the actual process of forming language was, must remain an unexplained problem; but the two elements in the production of language were undoubtedly the power of thought and the power of expression. Why certain sounds were applied to certain things, or objects, or ideas, we know not; but we know that there must have been, before sound, the power of perception, observation, classification; and thus thought was, humanly speaking, the originating cause of language. *Language is thought embodied in speech.* Words are the signs and instruments of thought. And what is thought but the operation or action of the mind itself, in its endeavor to define and express its own conceptions? Thus language, as the expression of

thought, which is the essential result and accompaniment of mind, is really the true manifestation of the human mind. It is the great distinction of humanity, as being the way in which the mind, or the spirit, in man, makes itself known. As the word without the spirit is dead, so, perhaps, it may be said that the spirit without the word is dead also. Let us come at the root of language, and we find that it is *spiritual;* and this truth increases inexpressibly its value and power to us as preachers. It is true that language is not a perfect expression of the spirit — how could it be? "For any definition we can frame for the eye as the organ of sight, the statement that 'God sees,' is untrue, and we are only enabled to decide this by the grasp we possess of the idea enveloped in the words 'He that made the eye shall he not see?' Thus language, with all its power of abstraction, is but concrete when compared with thought; and it is, perhaps, the privilege of advancing holiness, to be able to divest its thoughts more and more of the accretions, which are not wholly separable from them when clothed in human language."[1] Although language is thus, after all, an imperfect exhibition of the soul, or thought of the soul, yet it is the most perfect of all modes of spiritual expression. It is more perfect than music, painting, or any of the expressive arts. These are, in some sort, language, and very expressive language; but the language which is contained in words fits the soul more closely, and is more subtile and vital than they. The "winged words" fly forth as on the breath of the soul. Other modes of expression are more material, indefinite, and obscure. Speech is thus, more than anything else, the soul made visible. Ben Jonson says, "Language must show a man; speak, that I may see thee! It springs out of the most retired and inmost parts of us, and is the image of the parent of it, the mind. No glass renders a man's form and likeness so true as his speech." Walter

[1] Christian Remembrancer, April, 1860, p. 310.

Savage Landor says, "Language is a part of a man's character." In fact, no two persons speak the same language, nor give precisely the same meaning to words. Every man's speech is, to a certain degree, peculiar and individual, being the image of his own soul, and of no one's else. He may try, perhaps, to hide his spirit in his language, but it will, if he speaks much, show itself. If language has this *spiritual* source and power, it deserves the greatest attention, for subtile and profound forces are wrapped up in it, and deep influences also, for evil or for good. We may see at a glance that if there is this profound spiritual source of language, the spring should be kept pure for the sake of the language, which is its true result and manifestation. Professor Whitney, in opposition to Max Müller and some of the German writers, regards language as a moral instead of a physical science; and he looks upon it as connected more with the spiritual will than with the physical life. Without doubt, because it is thus so deeply associated with moral responsibility, and so nearly allied to the soul itself, the Saviour said, "*For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*" Also the apostle James said, "*If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.*"

We would, therefore, lay down the simple proposition, that for every conceivable reason, whether spiritual or practical, *the study of language is essential to the preacher*, —

(1.) *That language may become the perfect instrument of thought.* If language is thus vitally related to spirit, and, therefore, to thought, it becomes the preacher — whose duty is, to communicate the highest and most spiritual thought to others — to study the powers and adaptations of language. These are hidden and evasive. There is *a law of life in language*, which is exeedingly subtile, and which cannot be grasped by the unstudious or mechanical mind. This is the acquisition of a profoundly disciplined perception. While the philological uses of a preacher's special study of lan-

guage, for the independent interpretation of the Scriptures, and for all scholarly purposes, are apparent, it is not of this aspect of language that we would now particularly speak. The preacher should study language, — *language itself*, not languages, — in order that it may become this spiritual manifestation or power; or, in other words, that it may become *a facile and perfect instrument of thought*. Such is the divine use of language. The word of God is the perfect instrument of the Spirit of God — "*the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*." And this higher truth respecting the word, or speech of God, extends even to him who is the preacher of that word; for he who preaches the word of God purely, wields "*the sword of the Spirit*." There is a spiritual influence, a pure power, that moves the soul and accompanies the language which springs from a soul striving to express divine truth in a way that shall honor it and worthily present it. And if the human preacher, proclaiming the truth purely, is thus permitted to wield the sword of the Spirit, how much more should his language become the sword of his own spirit! The word should be born with the thought. Language should be the perfect instrument of the preacher's own mind, doing with equal facility the mightiest and most delicate acts of his will. Even as his thought is, even as his inmost soul is, so should his language be. The spiritual force of the man should go forth without apparent effort, or incongruity of his words. Men should not think of his language, how beautiful or how strong it is, but should see himself in his language, should see his spirit. To designate a living writer and preacher, the language of Dr. Bushnell is, we think, in a marked degree, the manifestation of his thought; he seems to have brought his language to a wonderful accord with his inward self. His style might not be considered perfect, but it expresses himself, and it expresses what he wills. His mind wields speech as a strong, swift gymnast moves his limbs. Thought and word are one and indivisible — one act. He has made language

a study. He has appreciated its power, and sought for its living law. Everything he says, therefore, has a meaning, and is instinct with life. His use of words is at the same time exact and carelessly copious. It is not confined to what is called purity of style, but it has those higher qualities of power which require a wider and bolder sway over the realm of language. When he needs a strong word or phrase for his purpose, he digs it up like a rock out of the earth, and hurls it with all its ponderous weight. When, however, he wishes to express an abstract and philosophical idea, instead of simplifying it, and bringing it down to the level of the unphilosophical mind, he avails himself freely of learning and of accurate scientific terminology, knowing that there is an instinct in the appreciation of language even among common men, which is better than education. In a word, he lays hold of anything in the kingdom of language which *serves his thought*, which manifests most perfectly the force and sagacity of his spirit. Another instance among modern preachers of this plastic and vital use of language, though not with the peculiar power of Dr. Bushnell in this one particular, is F. W. Robertson. It was said of a more ancient preacher still, — Apollos, — that he was "an eloquent man," referring, doubtless, to this power of expression in language. The preacher's use of language should have all the naturalness of a common man's speech, and, at the same time, all the scholar's command of the higher and more hidden resources of language; its exquisite adaptations to human thought.

(2.) *That he may have a mastery of words.* The preacher's use of language, we have said, should have all the naturalness of a common man's speech, and, at the same time, all the scholar's command of the wide resources of language. "A well-educated person in England seldom uses more than about three thousand or four thousand words in actual conversation. Accurate thinkers and close reasoners, who avoid vague and general expressions, and wait till they find the

word that exactly fits their meaning, employ a larger stock; and eloquent speakers may rise to a command of ten thousand. Shakspeare, who displayed a greater variety of expression than probably any other writer in any language, produced all his plays with about fifteen thousand words. Milton's prose works are built up with eight thousand; and the Old Testament says all that it has to say with five thousand six hundred and forty-two words."[1] How shall the preacher obtain this sway over the wide field of language — how shall he acquire this copious vocabulary — unless he makes language a special study — language itself — the powers, resources, and wealth of words? This is a broad realm; one must conquer it, to use its revenues. He may have thought and learning, he may have a vivid conception of truth; but unless he can express his thoughts, unless he can wield this instrument of the soul with freedom, he is a dumb prophet, he is an inarticulate soul, the word of God languishes imprisoned within him. One may deal too exclusively with the substance, and neglect too much the form, of truth, or the harmonious development of the substance and the form. The language, therefore, of some preachers, when they begin to attempt to communicate thought to other minds, is stiff, mechanical, unyielding. They are not masters of expression. The living power of words is not theirs. Their ideas freeze while they speak. The inward conception finds a totally inadequate medium of representation. There is no vital union between the thought and the word; so that the style has either the appearance of not being one's own, or of being that of an uncultivated mind; which impression, in either case, may be entirely false. The young preacher should be warned of his deficiency in time, and he should set himself about correcting or supplying this great want in his education; and unless he does this, he can hardly become a *natural* or *original* speaker; for if a man wishes

[1] Müller's Science of Language, p. 266.

to have freshness and originality of style, he must master language, he must make words subservient to his will; else he will express them in a formal style, which he has caught from others, he knows not how. He cannot be original unless he has a style of his own, as well as thoughts of his own. A man's style of writing or speaking may not be a good one, though it be his own; but it certainly is not a good one unless it *is* his own, unless he has broken loose from the leading-strings of imitation, and has acquired a genuine, unconscious style of his own. He who has a style that is expressive of his own mind has a style which his own mind will look and work freely in, and he does not fight in Saul's armor.

(3.) *That he may, above all, be a master of his mother tongue.* How can one become possessor of a natural, copious, and flexible style, which is the genuine investiture of his thought, until he thoroughly understands the genius and structure of the language in which he thinks? As it is now satisfactorily proved that there can be no mixed language, though one language may contribute to another, how important that one should understand his own! Yet it is a singular fact that most educated men study, all their lives, the dead languages, and neglect that language which is the only living one to them, and which must be learned in its own grammar, history, and literature. "The general and obvious distinction between the grammar of the English and the Continental tongues is, that whereas in the latter the relations of words are determined by their form, or by a traditional structure of period handed down from a more strictly inflectional phase of those languages, in English, on the other hand, those relations do not indicate, but are deduced from, the logical categories of the words which compose the period, and hence they must be demonstrated by a very different process from that which is appropriate for syntaxes depending on other principles. A truly philosophical system of English syntax cannot,

then, be built up by means of the Latin scaffolding which has served for the construction of all the Continental theories of grammar, and with which alone the literary public is familiar, but must be conceived and executed on a wholly new and original plan."[1]

Some of the purest and most idiomatic English writers in point of style have been men of one speech. Shakspeare's "small Latin and less Greek" is a familiar fact; and in the same category may be reckoned Izaak Walton, Dean Swift (who neglected his regular academic studies, and applied himself mostly to the reading of poetry), John Bunyan, Goldsmith, to a certain extent, and De Foe, and, in modern times, Dr. Franklin, Cobbett, Erskine, Daniel Webster, Hugh Miller. These men, with one or two exceptions, knew little of the classics, or of any language other than their own; and yet with what power they used their own! What vigorous English some of our American editors employ, who have had but a brief common school education! The strength that these men have, as writers and speakers, comes purely from the English tongue; and this shows that there is an original power in our language which does not depend upon foreign learning.

In order to acquire this thorough mastery of the English language, two sources of study are particularly valuable, viz., *English literature* and *English philology*.

(*a.*) *English literature.* Nothing helps to make us facile and ready writers more than a rich course of reading in English literature. In this way we gain a copious style, and a quick perception of the marvellous powers of words. Preachers are often exceedingly deficient in this kind of literary culture, and that is one of the causes of their stiff, barren style. Their English reading has been confined exclusively to professional authors, to theological works whose style, perhaps, is in the highest degree rigid, and devoid

[1] Marsh's English Language and its early Literature, Lect. I., p. 22.

of vital beauty. They do not enter the broad fields of English poetry, drama, history, humor, and fiction. A knowledge of English literature implies a universal range of authors, and excludes anything strictly technical or professional. It has relations to humanity generally, rather than to any particular department of it. And what language may compare with the English in this vital element, in this multiform character, in this wide scope of subjects that appeal to our common nature? It is not merely for the acquisition of new knowledge, but of mental self-culture, of spiritual enriching and invigoration, that ministers should make themselves widely acquainted with the treasures of English literature. "Mere philological or etymological learning cannot make up for this want of general literary cultivation and reading. Dictionary definitions, considered as a means of philological instruction, are as inferior to miscellaneous reading as a *hortus siccus* to a botanic garden. Words exert their living powers, and give utterance to sentiment and meaning, only in the organic combinations for which nature has adapted them, and not in the alphabetic single-file in which lexicographers post and drill them."[1] De Quincey says, "There is, first, the literature of *knowledge*, and, secondly, the literature of *power*. The function of the first is to teach; the function of the second is to *move*." Apply this remark to English literature, and what names of living power start up! They show us that if we are to go to Greek and Latin, German and French, for our learning, we need not step out of the charmed circle of English literature for works that communicate power, that reach the springs of motive and action, that educate character; for there is a spiritual depth and penetration of the heart in English literature that is not to be found elsewhere. In Carlyle's words, "It is planted in man's heart."

We should endeavor to read English literature upon some

[1] Marsh's Eng. Lang. and Early Lit., p. 442.

plan; we should divide it into its great epochs, make ourselves acquainted with the representative authors of each epoch, and study the growth and changes of the language from its origin to the present time.

But in order to obtain a thorough knowledge and real mastery of the English language, it is necessary to give some serious attention (*b.*) to *English philology.* This is the study of the structural character of the language, its historical changes, and its practical analysis. To do this one must go to the very roots of the language, to the *Anglo-Saxon*, and observe the influence of the changes of form upon thought, and the introduction of new foreign elements that were grafted upon the old Germanic stock.

There are three great sources or treasuries of the English language in a philological as well as a literary point of view; and especially of its idiomatic Anglo-Saxon element, which every one who wishes to have a pure and vigorous English style should endeavor to make himself familiar with — the works of *Chaucer*, of *Shakspeare*, and of the *English Bible.* We mention them together chiefly in respect to their language.

1. *Chaucer.* The study of Chaucer forms, perhaps, our best introduction to the study of the Saxon element in our language; for, although great changes had already taken place in his day, yet Chaucer is in one sense the creator of the English tongue; he first moulded it into the forms of literature. Whatever remained of the Saxon after the Norman-French had been ingrafted upon it, and in some respects had fatally supplanted or outgrown it, he used with freedom and vigor. It forms still the staple of his language, and as his genius fixed the language in its forms of grammar and literature, the Saxon element did not, after him, yield to any extraneous influences. We may, indeed, set it down as an axiom capable of the fullest proof, that Chaucer's grammatical use of the language did not materially differ from its present use. Most of the essential gram-

matical changes from the ancient Saxon had already taken place; although Dr. Johnson pronounced it impossible to ascertain precisely when our speech ceased to be Saxon, and when it began to be genuine English. But the language of Chaucer is substantially our language; and the true conservative influence, or the radically assimilating and unifying principle, in our tongue, now, as it was in his day, is its Saxon element: that is the substratum which it is impossible to disintegrate, and which has never given way to the influences of conquest; it is therefore well worth our study. "Philosophy and science, and the arts of high civilization, find their utterance in the Latin words, or, if not in the Latin, in the Greek. One part of the language is not to be cultivated at the expense of the other; the Saxon at the cost of the Latin, as little as the Latin at the cost of the Saxon."[1] But when a Latin and a Saxon word offer themselves for choice, Trench would have us take the Saxon. "But when we come to the words which indicate different states, emotions, passions, mental processes, — all, in short, that expresses the moral or intellectual man, — the Anglo-Saxon vocabulary is eminently affluent."[2] De Quincey says, "*Pathos*, in situations which are homely, or at all connected with domestic affections, naturally moves in Saxon words. And why? Because the Saxon is the aboriginal element — the basis, not the superstructure; consequently it comprehends all the ideas which are natural to the heart of man, and to the elementary situations of life." Whatever, then, we, as preachers, may draw from the Anglo-Saxon element of the language, we thereby gain in the vocabulary of the heart. One cannot move men to tears in the Johnsonian style; and the preacher needs to learn this simple language of feeling.

2. *Shakspeare.* We cannot enter into the wide subject of the uses of the study of "the myriad-minded bard" to

[1] Trench's English, Past and Present, p. 34.
[2] Marsh's Eng. Lang. and Lit., p. 94.

the preacher, as an aid in the knowledge of human nature, and as a guide to the depths of our moral being. Dr. Emmons, the incarnation of the logical intellect, read Shakspeare as a help in his preaching, and in the study of the human heart. The moral element lies at the basis of Shakspeare's greatness; and it is this ethical and heart-searching quality, at the same time penetrating and genial, wonderfully discerning, yet healing and loving all, that makes him the poet of universal humanity. Shakspeare paints man and develops character, not as other artists, by working upon philosophical principles, so that this person or that person is the embodiment of a character; but he views man, as a whole, with blendings of good and evil, wisdom and folly, strength and weakness; swayed now by this motive and now by that; capable of vast effort, but perishing before the moth; a creature of heaven and earth; a being of impulses, sympathies, attractions, as well as of rational judgments, and as diversified and unaccountable as the universe he lives in; not exhausting any character, but letting him act fragmentarily, as he does in actual life, and as he does in the Bible, which book Shakspeare studied, and which is the only perfect transcript of man, because man's spirit is a great deep, and is supernatural and immortal. Ulrici, the German critic of Shakspeare, says that it is wonderful that a man who possessed such depths of passion and knowledge of sin, could have so controlled his life as to have been always, as he seems to have been, at least after his youthful period, respected and beloved. He says that his spirit, and his spiritual idea of God and man, was decidedly Protestant, contrary to the narrower judgment of Carlyle. Goethe says, "You would think, while reading his plays, that you stood before the enclosed awful books of fate, while the whirlwind of most impassioned life was howling through the leaves, and tossing them fiercely to and fro."

But the study of Shakspeare in his use of *language*, of

the English tongue, in what has been called "his matchless use of words," is what we would now specially notice. We find that the Saxon was also the substratum of his style. He is said to have *sixty* per cent. of native Saxon words, and the English Bible has about the same. Milton has less than thirty-three per cent. Shakspeare had, as before remarked, a comparatively restricted vocabulary, not exceeding, it is said, fifteen thousand words. His affluence of language, according to Marsh, arises from his variety of combination, rather than his numerical abundance of words; he stood at the culmination of the strength and richness of the English tongue, after Spenser and many skilful writers since Chaucer's day had moulded and refined it; and yet it had not lost its simple English character. The naturalness, sweetness, expression, and force of Shakspeare's language sprang from this source. But Shakspeare also knew how to use the resources of the classical words of the language, in order to give variety, subtilty, elegance, and a lofty majesty to his thought. Shakspeare proved that the English language is the finest instrument of thought man ever had — capable of the most varied expression, whether it takes the form of precise thinking, or of the highest soarings of the imagination. There is a *spiritual* quality in the English which no other language possesses in an equal degree; and this has always been its characteristic, for a language expresses the history and spirit of a race; and in the English race, with all its grossness and earthliness, the moral and spiritual element has predominated. "It is in this inherited quality of moral revelation, which has been perpetuated and handed down from the tongue of the Gothic conquerors to its English first-born, that lies, in good part, the secret of Shakspeare's power of bodying forth so much of man's internal being, and clothing so many of his mysterious sympathies in living words."[1] We doubt whether so great a genius as Shakspeare, or even a greater,

[1] Marsh's Eng. Lang., &c., p. 94.

if we could conceive of such, could have written his dramas in the French language. And Shakspeare must have fully appreciated the moral richness and power of his mother tongue, to use it as he did; for the opinion that prevailed so long, that Shakspeare was a poet of nature, without art, — born, not made, — while in one sense true, in another is not true. He was a transcendent genius, but he shows everywhere the artist; though perhaps there never was an artist who wrought less on established rules.

What is the secret of the wonderful *freshness* of Shakspeare's language, so that it is always new, always wet with the morning dew, when the works of other great authors grow obsolete? This is a question worthy of our special study. The language of Shakspeare is so completely the expression of his mind that we think of the beauty of the thought, and are moved by the pathos or power of what is said, but we never think of the language itself, unless, indeed, we study it. This is the perfection of language; this is to have the language one with the thought, the true expression of the spirit. In his language we look upon the real mind or spirit of Shakspeare, unconfused by the medium through which it is expressed. That, surely, is one of the great sources of his power. While thus a limpid expression of his thought, it by no means follows that all of Shakspeare's language has this achromatic character. It is sometimes obscure, dark, difficult to be understood; but that springs from the depth of the thought, and not from the obscurity of the language. Here the language suits the thought, and is born with it.

Shakspeare's style, contrary to the prevailing canon of literary taste at the present day, is highly *metaphorical*. Oftentimes his most profound and exquisite thinking utters itself in this way; and although it may be called the language of poetry, yet it is a question whether the total disregard of the metaphorical style of thought — a style which springs from the closest relations of nature to the mind — is not a loss of vital power in style.

3. *The English Bible.* It is wonderful how the English translators of the Bible struck the golden mean between the Latin and the original Saxon. "There was, indeed, something still deeper than love of sound and genuine English at work in our translators, whether they were conscious of it or not, which hindered them from sending the Scriptures to their fellow-countrymen dressed out in a semi-Latin garb. The Reformation, which they were in this translation so mightily strengthening and confirming, was just a throwing off, on the part of the Teutonic nations, of that everlasting pupilage in which Rome would have held them; an assertion, at length, that they were come to full age, and that not through her, but directly through Christ, they would address themselves unto God. The use of the Latin language as the language of worship, as the language in which the Scriptures might alone be read, had been the great badge of servitude, even as the Latin habits of thought and feeling which it promoted had been the great helps to the continuance of this servitude through long ages. It lay deep in the very nature of their course that the reformers should develop the Saxon, or essentially national, element in the language."[1]

The King James version was completed and published in 1611. In the great religious controversies at and after that period, this version became the quoted authority, the standard of appeal; and thus it planted itself deep in the mind and heart of the people, so that not only in a spiritual, but linguistic point of view, it has exerted a more shaping influence on our language than any other volume. If Chaucer was the harbinger, the English Bible was the finisher or perfecter, of the English language. It is not merely the colloquial language, nor merely the book language; it is rather the popular religious language, or the choice phraseology of the best Christian minds of the nation. England had been Protestant for nearly a century when our English

[1] Trench's English, Past and Present, p. 39.

version was made, and Wycliffe's, Tyndale's, Matthews', Coverdale's, and Cranmer's translations had been in the hands of the people, the first of them from the fourteenth century. Our version was not a new one, but was founded upon those previous translations, with but slight changes of expression, so that it marks the growth and perfection of the language during its whole formative period. It looks far back, as well as far forward; it stretches over the entire history of the English language; it embodies essentially the best speech of the English people during at least five centuries; it is the most genuine English since the time when the English language became the real expression of English thought; and it is a remarkable fact that the best usage of words at this moment is more nearly assimilated to the style of the English version of the Bible than it was a century or two centuries ago, showing that the English Bible exerts a constant attraction and conservative influence upon the language. We cannot get far away from it and still be English. It is, we think, not one of the least advantages of our profession, even in a rhetorical point of view, that we are driven to the constant reading and study of the English Bible. It should exert a strong influence upon our style; ought we not to study it continually, even for that purpose? Coleridge said, "Intense study of the Bible will keep any writer from being vulgar in point of style." It will also enrich and invigorate, for there is just that mingling of prose and poetry in the Bible which marks the highest and richest character in style. "We should take this silent warning from the pages of revelation, and combine in our literary culture the same elements of the actual and the imaginative."[1]

In addition to what has been said of the literary and philological study of our language, we would remark that it should be studied as it is used among *living men*. This we have before urged. As preachers, we are called upon to leave

[1] Reed's Eng. Lit., p. 75.

the language of books, and to take up that of living men, purified of its debasements. We are to study the speech of intelligent men and women, as we hear it every day by the hearth, in the streets, and by the way. "Grammaticasters seek the history of language in written, and especially in elegant, literature; but, except in the fleeting dialect of pedants, linguistic change and progress begin in oral speech; and it is long before the pen takes up and records the forms and words which have become established in the living tongue. If you would know the present tendency of English, go, as Luther did, to the market and the workshop; you will there hear new words and combinations which orators and poets will adopt in a future generation."[1] We are, if possible, to get hold of the *spoken* language. We should possess a medium of communication with the common heart. Augustine went so far, when preaching to the colonial inhabitants of Africa, as to speak their broken Latin to them. We should rid ourselves, as far as possible, of the language of books, while at the same time we retain the purifying and elevating influences of true scholarship. Old Roger Ascham's rule was "to speak like a common man, and think like a wise man." A preacher who cannot talk to the people so that they can understand him is stopped at the threshold of his ministry.

In conclusion, let the preacher first have the truth, and then know how to express it. Let him not neglect the last, while acquiring the first. Let him fill his soul with the truth, and then seek to make it known to men. This can be done alone through language. Language makes the word "*the preached word*," the living word, which is able to save men's souls.

[1] Marsh's Eng. Lang. and Lit., p. 452.

§ 22. *Delivery.*

Some writers object to considering "elocution," or the delivery of a discourse, as a legitimate part of rhetoric, inasmuch as the *mode* of communicating thought or truth is not the essential thing in rhetoric, but rather the communicating of thought itself. It is also held that elocution is not a constituent part of rhetoric, because there are ways of communicating thought other than by the voice; because we have a complete product of art when the thought is embodied in language; and because, as a practical matter, in teaching the two, it is better to keep them apart.[1] But we think, nevertheless, that anything which enables us to communicate truth, and to communicate it effectively, comes legitimately under the art of rhetoric. For aught we can see, elocution has just as much right to be considered a part of rhetoric as has style of composition; for both contribute to the effective communication of truth. At all events, if elocution is not in the strictest sense an essential part of rhetoric, yet it has a close relation to it; and if rhetoric be confined, as we have limited it in our definition, to the art of *spoken* public discourse, it has a vital relation to it.

To preach forcibly calls out not only the intellectual energies, the eloquence of the mind, but what Cicero calls "the eloquence of the body." And it is by no means a small thing, or a hastily-won accomplishment, to acquire the art of a good delivery. It requires great pains and study; for it is not a merely mechanical art, but it calls in play the taste, the judgment, the moral and emotional nature, and the reasoning powers. Talma, the tragedian, used to say that *thinking* was the great part of his art. It is, perhaps, one of the remoter consequences of the sinfulness of man,

[1] Day's Art of Discourse, pp. 14, 15.

that it requires a process of art to get back to nature, and that the highest art is only, after all, to be natural. And there is a deeper idea still in the delivery of a sermon, as distinguished from every other form of discourse, in its connection with *spiritual* instrumentalities, and viewed as a medium of communicating divine truth. What was Whitefield's preaching, looked at as an instrument of the conversion of men, without his peculiar power of delivery? In such a delivery the Holy Spirit has the chief controlling influence; the highest activities of the spiritual as well as intellectual life are engaged in it; and the whole man is raised and transformed into an instrument of God's truth.

Whately is inclined to the view that the study of elocution renders the speaker *artificial;* but preachers do not usually err from carrying the art of elocution to an undue extent, but err rather from a careless and unimpressive manner. Of course, exclusive attention should not be given to the delivery, and *in the act of speaking*, elocution should be forgotten; but this is not saying that much may not be done in private to produce an unconsciously noble delivery. The soldier forgets his drill in action, but his drill makes him a better soldier.

The study of elocution has its good effects, too, upon the *style*. One will be more careful to adapt his style to the purposes of speech — to make it easy, strong, and flowing. What, in many respects, could be a better spoken style for popular influence than Daniel Webster's? and that was gained by speaking — by speaking to courts, to senates, to great audiences of human beings, for immediate effect and conviction. It was the fruit of his contact and contest with other minds on public occasions. His style became fitted to his delivery. The actual delivery of his thoughts improved and vitalized his style. And the benefits of a good delivery upon an audience are great; by his look, tone, gesture, a speaker infuses himself into his hearers' minds, and makes them for the time think and feel as he does.

Robert Hall, it is said, had the art, not only of communicating what he said, but of communicating *himself*, to his audience. It was the whole man speaking. That is true eloquence. How many preachers have been intellectual men and weighty thinkers, who never could thus communicate themselves or their thoughts to other minds!

The delivery of a public discourse implies especially four things: Enunciation, Pronunciation, Emphasis, and Action.

1. *Enunciation.* This has regard to the fulness and perfectness of vocal sound in speaking, and it includes the whole matter of the management and training of the *voice* — a subject of no little importance to the preacher. There are few voices — particularly if they belong to men whom God has called to be the heralds of his truth — so faulty and so weak by nature that they may not be made, by a persevering and intelligent training, effective, and, it may be, powerful. It is well, therefore, to acquaint one's self thoroughly with the physiology of the organs of the voice, which are so delicate, complicated, and wonderful. If a musician should perfectly know his instrument, and should exercise care in preserving the vigor and purity of its tone, so that it may be ready to give forth the mightiest and the most delicate tones; how much more should the speaker understand and guard his more exquisite instrument! The first simple, common-sense axiom in regard to the voice is, that *it depends for its strength and clearness upon a general sound state of health.* A man in bad health will show it in his voice, in its feebleness or harshness; for in ill health, the muscular system, upon which the voice depends, is relaxed; and a man with a cracked voice is little better than a cracked bell or a cracked musical instrument. The preacher should strive to maintain a good, vigorous tone of health, for the purpose of maintaining a good vocal tone. He should regard his body as an instrument in God's hands to proclaim his word; it should be kept strong and pure, as

the medium of divine inspiration and instruction. The "Baptist's" living in the free solitudes of nature, and feeding upon locusts and wild honey, may have had something to do in making the strong "voice" of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord."

A second plain axiom in regard to the voice is, *that one should speak upon a full inhalation of air.* The chest is the seat of vocal power. One should be careful, in speaking, that the reservoir of air in the chest is never exhausted; he should take air in, as well as force it out; and a clear, full, and, at the same time, delicate, enunciation comes from having air enough, and using all the air inhaled, "speaking with the whole of ourselves, and not merely with the throat and lips." Upon this full column of air in the chest the voice should ring freely in the head, as in the top of a dome, not confining it to the chest, but using the chest-voice only as a basis; for it is a false rule not to employ the head (vocally) in speaking. It is the concavity of the mouth and head which gives the resonant and sonorous quality to the voice — a quality lamentably wanting in some of our American speakers.

Still another suggestion in regard to the voice and the enunciation is, that *one should strive for a natural tone.* "The voice is first to be formed. It is to be strengthened by an increased capacity of the lungs, and an acquired, strong, respiratory action. Its thorough discipline must be mastered, from the lightest whisper to the loudest shouting; not with a view to actual use, but for securing a command over every degree of force and pliancy. Even in a few weeks a stentorian power can be imparted to a comparatively weak voice."[1] But, notwithstanding all that may be done to discipline and train the voice, it should still be a *natural* voice; for an artificial voice, let it be never so good, is less effective than a natural one; it unpleasantly suggests something artificial in the man or in his thoughts. Every person

[1] Frobisher's Voice and Action, p. 19.

has his own natural pitch of voice, one that is nicely adapted to his mind and temperament. Let him not strive to change this divine arrangement, and take up another man's instrument. Let him speak with his own voice, and not with that of some other preacher or speaker, whom he has selected as a model. Above all, let him not speak like an old man while he is still a young man; we wish to hear the fresh, high, varied tones of youth in the voice of a young man. Therefore, as we have before suggested, let not even head-tones be avoided, — the highest radical tones, — if one is only mindful to have a chest-tone as a basis. Let the voice play freely and naturally up and down, like a musical instrument. This is agreeable to hear, and it relieves the speaker. It is well to speak in the pitch that one would use in common conversation, only clearer and fuller; and yet some speakers assume a tone which is entirely unnatural — a declamatory tone, or a solemn tone, or a "holy tone;" as if preaching was anything else than talking loud enough for a large audience to hear distinctly. "Placing himself, then, in the position of an authorized teacher, and theoretically speaking his own words, he must adopt a tone and manner *corresponding* to his position. His tone must be his *conversational* tone, and his manner (reverential as to the Deity, colloquial as to the congregation) his *natural* manner, varied, indeed, according to the subject, but still so really his *own* that any listening friend would recognize him to be the speaker by his tone and manner alone." [1]

Every public speaker should, as the least he can do, endeavor to remedy or improve the imperfections of his own voice. If he has a feeble voice, let him strive to give it more fulness; if he has a thick and guttural voice, let him aim at greater clearness and refinement of tone; if he has a

[1] Gould's Good English, p. 181 (Clerical Elocution). We would commend this brief essay on elocution as one of the best upon this subject. The author maintains that any intelligent speaker can, with thought and care, be a self-instructor in elocution.

rasping, harsh voice, let him endeavor to soften and sweeten it, to take off its wire-edge; but with all this, let him accept the voice God has given him, and use it, and not another man's; and, strange as it may sound, so many are the faults which one is apt to fall into by education, that it requires great study and labor to speak naturally.

As a last suggestion, one should *strive for a pure tone;* for this, more than anything else, indicates the cultivated speaker. A pure tone is that which is free from all false tones. A false tone, as distinguished from a pure tone, arises from some imperfect respiration, or false carriage of the voice; as, for instance, a *pectoral* tone, which comes from an imperfect use of the lungs. Those who have the misfortune to be consumptive, or those who have weak lungs, are apt to have the pectoral tone. Fuller and more vigorous respiration is needed for them. The voice, if possible, should be lifted out of, or, at least, not be suffered to lie buried in, the sepulchre of the chest, where it rumbles in hollow tones. A preacher should stand erect, so that all the organs of speech can have free play. He should not be a lecturer, but a preacher; and it is here that the extempore speaker has an immense advantage. The whole apparatus of the vocal organs is to be employed in producing a clear, pure tone; and a speaker should find out by practice, and by the criticism of friends, where his defect lies, or in what one imperfectly used organ; and thus he may effectually cure a natural faultiness of voice, and, by persistent effort, bring up even a weak voice to great power and efficiency.

We would add that clearness, rather than extreme loudness, is best suited for the pulpit-voice — that full, audible, manly, even, flowing enunciation on which one can easily weave all characters and varieties of tone, from the most delicate to the most vehement. Quintilian finely remarks, "That delivery is *elegant* which is supported by a voice that is *easy*, *powerful*, *sweet*, *well sustained*, *clear*, *pure*, *that cuts the air and penetrates the ear;* for there is

a kind of voice naturally qualified to make itself heard, not by its strength, but by a peculiar excellence of tone — a voice which is obedient to the will of the speaker, susceptible of every variety of sound and inflection that can be required, and possessed of *all the notes of a musical instrument;* and to maintain it there should be strength of lungs, and breath that can be steadily prolonged, and is not likely to sink under labor. Neither the lowest musical tone, nor the highest, is proper for oratory; for the lowest, which is far from being clear, and is too full, can make no impression on the minds of an audience; and the highest, which is very sharp, rising above the natural pitch, is not susceptible of inflection from pronunciation, nor can it endure to be kept long on the stretch; for the voice is like the strings of an instrument: the more relaxed it is, the graver and fuller its tone; the more it is stretched, the more thin and sharp is its sound. Thus a voice in the lowest key wants force; in the highest, is in danger of being cracked. We must therefore cultivate the *middle* tones, which may be raised when we speak with vehemence, and lowered when we deliver ourselves with gentleness."[1]

In *reading the Scriptures*, the voice should, as a general rule, move upon a monotone, but without becoming monotonous; it should rise and fall easily, according to the sense. There should be something of the same easy variety in the tone as there is in common conversation. Practice is required in the proper use of *cadence*, and there are many sublime passages of Scripture, especially in the book of Revelation, which should be read with something of a swell in the voice; so also should many of the poetical passages of the Old Testament. The prayer and the reading of the hymns require the preacher to vary his simple tone, in order to mark elevation of thought and feeling; though this may be easily overdone, as in the case of the poet's divine, who

[1] Instit., B. XI., c. iii., s. 42.

"gives to prayer
The adagio and andante it demands."

The words "*Give attention to reading*" might be addressed in their most literal sense to the preacher; for reading the Scriptures has been rightly called "a continuous commentary of the text."

There is no instrument more capable of cultivation than the human voice; no instrument that equals it in beauty, richness, scope, and power; its thunder tones rouse and roll through the inmost depths of the conscience; its flute-like notes fill the mind with harmonious visions of happiness and peace; its pathos touches the springs of the heart, and makes wicked men feel like children, and weep like children over their wrong-doings.

The second element of delivery, *Pronunciation*, is simply to utter articulately, or to give, with clear precision, to every vocal element, whether vowel or consonant, its proper articulate sound. This distinguishes an educated and refined, from a slovenly and uncultivated, pronunciation.

Emphasis, when rightly given, is also a great beauty in speaking. It does not consist in mere loudness, but rather in an indescribable variety of tones and modulations. It is thought, for example, by some preachers, that it is absolutely necessary to pronounce terrible words in a terrible manner, in loud and startling tones of voice; but it is generally more emphatic and solemnly impressive when the feeling of awe which such words should inspire leads us to sink the voice, though without softening or weakening it.

"Correct accent is indispensable to spirited, tasteful, and intelligent reading and speaking; every accented word becomes the seat of life in utterance. A feeble and inexpressive utterance kills the thoughts of the speaker." [1]

The severest argument may be lighted up by a discrimi-

[1] Vandenhoff's Clerical Assistant.

nating emphasis, just as a painter, when he has almost finished his picture, puts in, here and there, what he calls the "lights;" and so Nature, if one observes a landscape, always distributes her lights — not in masses, but in points.

Whately decries the artificial study of emphasis. He says, "Fill your mind with the matter; be inspired by it; be sincerely desirous of imparting it to your hearers; and then your emphasis will take care of itself." That is good advice as far as it goes. But how many good and zealous ministers are very ineffective preachers! It would seem to be better to fill one's mind with his sermon, and with the desire to impart the truth it contains, and then study it to know how this may best be done. There should be a study of emphasis if for no other reason than to avoid having too much emphasis, as is the case with some preachers, which makes a ranting style, that wearies both hearer and speaker; for violence in elocution is not force.

Action is natural to man in speaking. The child gestures when he talks, and it is well to observe the gestures of children, and to note their freedom, grace, and effectiveness; for well-timed and natural gesture adds greatly to the power of speech. There is, however, a difference of opinion in regard to the propriety of much or little action, and of little or no action, in the pulpit. Audiences themselves differ here. Some speakers who enchain their audiences while standing stiff as poles — enchain them by their thoughts — would be considered dull preachers by other audiences, who like to see the dust fly from the cushion. There is an oaken desk shown at Eisenach, in Germany, which Luther broke with his fist in preaching.

Notwithstanding this difference of opinion, there can be no doubt that *some* gesture, some timely and animated action, is good for the preacher. European and Oriental nations gesture constantly, both in conversation and public speaking; and we have no doubt that Demosthenes and the

great orators of antiquity used much, and at times vehement, gesture.

The simple rule in gesture would seem to be, that while it should be free and natural, like a child's, it should not be carried to an excess; that is worse than no action at all; none at all is at least safe, if not eloquent. There should be, in fact, a certain thoughtful restraint in gesture, and just enough of art to avoid awkward, improper, and misplaced action.

Some men incline by temperament to a great deal of action in speaking: let them not wholly restrain it, for then they would be unnatural; but let them be careful that the action be fit, and subordinate to the thought. Other men incline to little or no gesture: let them be careful not to become excessive in their stiff monotony. It is best, perhaps, for a young preacher to gesture as little as possible, until he gets used to preaching, and feels free to be himself in the pulpit. Audiences are involuntarily on the watch to discover the evidences of *art* in the sermon, and in the style of delivery, of a young preacher. When they see the rhetorical education in him, he ceases to impress them with what he is saying. Audiences ought to be disappointed here. There should be no mannerism of action to divert attention from the plain message of God which the young preacher is delivering.

All gestures should be free and flowing, not cramped and confined. There should be nothing small, fastidious, and mincing in gesture, since the idea of man's greatness should be before us in the orator. Cicero commends, in oratory, "*a bold and manly action of body*, not learned from the theatre and the player, but from the camp, or even from the palæstra."[1] There is, indeed, much in the ancient idea of the "free elbow." Page, the artist, sagaciously remarks, that the superiority of ancient sculpture over modern consists chiefly in its bold angles; and he gives as an illustra-

[1] De Oratore, B. III.

tion the attitude of one of the sons of Niobe, stretching his widely-extended arms to heaven. Pulpits should be made to admit of this large and free action. They should be so made that nearly the whole of the preacher's form can be seen; for true gesture is the speaking of the whole man, of all his limbs, and even of his feet; and perhaps the good time will come when the pulpit, with a desk for notes, will be abolished altogether, and the preacher will stand up in his simple manhood, with nothing adventitious about him, and speak the word with naturalness, spontaneity, and freedom, fresh from the heart.

Minima auxilia ne spernamus. Nothing is too small, nothing too trifling, which helps us to become better preachers. In the delivery of a discourse on so solemn a theme as that of divine truth, we should at least strive to avoid anything which will mar the effect of the sacred message — any inexcusable carelessness of speaking, awkwardness of manner, harshness of voice, flippancy of tone, or wearisomeness of monotony. The delivery should be natural, affectionate, and free. It should have not only manly dignity and simplicity, but cheerful variety, and, above all, noble action, which may be the medium of the divine energy. To quote from an admirable essay of Dr. Skinner (Am. Pres. and Theol. Rev., January, 1865), "Action, which is more than knowledge, needs aids for itself. In elocutionary action, as well as in thinking and writing, the preacher, however qualified by self-culture, can attain to no degree of spirituality by merely natural effort. If the activity of a preacher in speaking — the eloquence of the body — be indeed spiritual, it is doubtless a higher exercise of the spiritual life than either of its other exercises in the business of preaching. It must needs be so, if it be answerable in all respects to the unique and mysterious exigencies of such a work as delivering appropriately the inspired word of God, as a vehicle and representative of the Holy Spirit. Apart from a very special operation of the Spirit himself, who is

sufficient for the just performance of this work? Spiritual things, expressing themselves fitly, in spiritual modulations of the voice, spiritual looks, spiritual attitudes, the supernatural exerting itself in and through these bodily signs of thought and feeling — think of one's having in himself a sufficiency for this! The apostles, with all their gifts for other uses, had it not; nay, even our Lord's spirituality of mind and knowledge, added to the perfectly natural use of the human powers, did not qualify him adequately for the business of dispensing the word, independently of the continued co-agency of the Spirit in this specific business; even he delivered his discourses under the anointing and in the power of the Spirit of God." (Luke 4 : 18; 21 : 14.)

As the result of this reasoning, the conclusion is drawn that "in all preliminary work in reference to actual delivery, the preacher must abide in communion with the Holy Spirit."

§ 23. *Taste in Preaching.*

Taste has been defined as "*that faculty of the mind which enables it to perceive, with the aid of reason to judge of, and with the help of imagination to enjoy, whatever is beautiful or sublime in the works of nature and art.*"[1] It aims to establish correct principles of criticism in relation to the production of the beautiful in art.

Preaching would be debased by calling it an æsthetical art; yet æsthetical principles must more or less enter into it, so far as it may come under rhetorical rules.

Quatremère De Quincy, in his work on the Fine Arts, places poetry at the head of the æsthetical arts, as being the purest product of the mental idea of beauty, and the farthest removed from the material object: then comes music; then painting; then sculpture; then architecture; then the various mechanical and illustrative arts. We would, however, be disposed to give to *oratory* the first place, so far as

[1] Quackenbos's Rhetoric, p. 170.

it is an æsthetic art, because it acts more immediately upon the soul; because it is more free and spiritual than any other art; and because it deals almost exclusively with pure ideas. Certainly, this is true of preaching. That oratory is an art there can be no doubt, for it is a system of means to an end, and of the most exquisite and intellectual kind; but it is not wholly an art, for the useful and *practical* predominate in it far more than the beautiful; and the beautiful itself, in oratory, is but relative, or what is fitted to increase the power and usefulness of oratory. It is, in fact, by the assistance which it renders, by the power which it lends to the efficiency of the oratorical art in its great ends, that the idea of the beautiful can enter at all into oratory.[1]

The preacher surely should not aim at the beautiful, so far as to make it his end; but the principles of good taste, of true harmony and beauty, should be in his mind, so that all its productions should unconsciously take the highest form of true beauty. "*Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report*," — these noble and beautiful forms of things he is called to think upon, and he dwells perpetually in their high communion and meditation. They are chiefly forms of mental and moral beauty with him. "All high ideas of beauty," says Ruskin, "depend probably on delicate perceptions of fitness, propriety, relation, &c., which are purely *intellectual*." They are taken out of their sensible relations with the visible world, and become ideal forms or types of beauty in the mind, associated with sacred and eternal things, and with God himself.

While, then, the preacher does not, and should not, aim chiefly at the beautiful in art, he still may come through the beautiful into the good; and he more and more will find, as

[1] Bib. Sacra, vol. ii., p. 31.

he enters into the higher things of God, that the τὸ καλὸν and the τὸ ἀγαθὸν are one, that truth is beauty, and that a mighty power in preaching the gospel lies in its appeal to the universal æsthetic principle in the human heart. We would be willing to found this assertion upon no less an authority, though probably, to some, an unexpected one, than Jonathan Edwards, in the third chapter of his treatise on The Nature of True Virtue.

Æsthetics, looked upon as an art, or as a department of mental science, chiefly applies, according to the Kantian use of the term, to the *form* of thought which any beautiful object of nature or art assumes; it does not refer primarily to the thought or character of the object to which it is applied. But real beauty resides ultimately in the *idea;* first of all in the absolute idea of beauty itself, which has its type in the divine creative mind; thence it enters into the conception of the human mind; and from that conception a product of beauty is born, which is the outward expression of this ideal form. Beauty has been defined to be the union of the real and the ideal, or the ideal expressed in form.[1] The question is, *May this æsthetical idea of formal beauty enter into so solemn and practical a work as a sermon, or preaching?* We think it may, because, —

(1.) *Our affection for God is increased by the setting forth of his perfections and true loveliness.* The philosophical object of love, even of the highest love, is beauty. A sermon about God has for one of its aims, to bring out the beauty of the divine nature, — the essential beauty of God, — not in its relations to us, but as it is in itself, in its own ineffable loveliness, for our love and praise. But this may be considered a transcendental reason; and, more practically, the idea of beauty may enter into a sermon, because, —

(2.) *Beauty renders truth more attractive.* We cannot do

[1] Bib. Sacra, July, 1859, p. 471.

better here than to quote a passage from one of Schiller's essays on the Limits of Taste. "Certainly, beauty of investiture can promote intellectual convictions just as little as the elegant arrangement of a repast serves to satiate the guest, or the exterior polish of a man to decide his internal worth. But just as, on the other hand, the fine disposition of a table entices the appetite, and, on the other, a recommendatory exterior generally awakens and excites attention to the man, so by an attractive exhibition of truth we are favorably inclined to open our soul to it; and the hinderances in our disposition, which otherwise would have opposed the difficult prosecution of a long and rigorous chain of thought, are removed. The *subject* never gains by beauty of form, nor is the understanding assisted in its cognition by taste. The subject must recommend itself directly to the understanding through itself, while beauty of form addresses the imagination, and flatters it with a show of freedom."

The last expression of Schiller's shows one true use of the æsthetical principle as applied to oratory, and even to sacred oratory: it appeals agreeably and powerfully to the *imagination*, and thus makes way for the more favorable hearing of the truth; and even this advantage is not to be carelessly neglected by the preacher.

(3.) The æsthetical element has a place in the sermon *because the Scriptures themselves admit of it.* The Bible is full of the æsthetic element; the preaching of the prophets was a lively address to the imagination, by the presentation of the boldest and most beautiful symbolism; the preaching of the apostle Paul abounds in appeals to this principle. What is finer than his figure of the Roman armor, carried out with such wonderful beauty of detail, and which at this day is exquisitely illustrated by the bas-reliefs of Trajan's Column at Rome? The introduction to his discourse on the Areopagus is a splendid instance of the principle of adaptation, which is one of the qualities of

beauty. Paul had also a fine perception of the æsthetic quality of "propriety" — one that borders closely on "adaptation;" he addressed the fit word to every audience; he made use of Greek literature at Athens; he reasoned from the Hebrew Scriptures and theology at Jerusalem, and in the Jewish synagogue; he appealed to Roman law and opinions in addressing a Roman assembly.

But to come to an infinitely higher example — there is in the words and discourses of our Lord that sense of *moral* beauty, which, though it is not to be named with mere intellectual beauty, and least of all with beauty which is the object of perception by the senses, nevertheless comprehends the truest ideas of beauty of every kind. The Sermon on the Mount has a unity which is a foundation-quality of the beautiful. As the deep current of a great river bears everything along with it, so there runs through this discourse one formative idea of the "kingdom of God," as that kingdom descends from heaven into this world, and shapes its new results in human nature, society, responsibility, and life; and the development of this idea gives to the sermon the highest beauty of form, as well as the most profound depth of meaning — an objective and subjective beauty. Everything, indeed, that the Saviour said had a beauty which makes it attractive and immortal, and which gives it a divine significance, regarded simply as truth.

There is also to be observed in the New Testament, and in the sayings and discourses of our Lord, a frequent use of the word καλὸς or τὸ καλόν — the same word used by Plato and the Greek writers to signify "the beautiful," as distinguished from "the true" and "the good." On the most beautiful of the Etruscan vases, of unknown antiquity, the word Καλὸν is written, as if this expressed the perfection of the beautiful in art. We know that καλὸς bears the secondary moral meaning of "good," "true," "excellent," "worthy," as it is everywhere translated in the New Testament; but does it always entirely lose its original and proper idea

of "beautiful"? In Matt. 26 : 10, where the woman anoints the Saviour's feet, he says, "*Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me*" (ἔργον γὰρ καλὸν). Was not this a beautiful as well as good work? Matt. 5 : 16, "*Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works*" (τὰ καλὰ ἔργα) — "your beautiful works," in which the lustrous light of divine truth shines, and attracts men's eyes by its shining. The Lord called himself ὁ ποιμὴν καλὸς — "the good shepherd;" but why not "the beautiful shepherd" — one in whose character, nature, and work there is a beautiful fitness, propriety, worthiness, to be our spiritual shepherd? A Nestorian convert is reported to have said to another Nestorian, "My brother, have you yet found Christ to be beautiful?" — as if he had said, "Does the beauty of the holiness and truth that are in Jesus appear to you so clear that it draws out your affections, that it gives you sincere delight to contemplate it, and make it your own?" Christ is the harmonizer of the world of mind and matter; he is mediator in the realms of truth and reason, as well as of faith; and by removing the deformity of sin from the world, he makes all things beautiful. But,

(4.) The principle of beauty may come into the sermon *because there is an absolute idea of beauty in the human mind.* This rests at the bottom of all ideas and conceptions of taste, and is a divinely implanted principle of our nature. Plato was the first to enunciate this truth, that the idea of beauty was in the *mind*, and that its perception in other objects was but the reflection of the mind's ideas — there being no real beauty in matter considered by itself. This theory Plato develops fully in The Greater Hippias; and all æsthetical theories which are worthy of being named since his day are but the applications and varieties of this Platonic assertion. Thus Diderot's theory was, that beauty is the application of the principle of *relation* in the mind; that where the mind perceives certain true relations in objects, the sentiment of beauty is awakened.

Sir Joshua Reynolds' theory also reduces beauty to the principle of just *proportion*, or moderation, which exists in the mind. Alison refers all the principles of beauty to the mental law of *association;* it is the waking up of agreeable trains of association by the beautiful object; for example, a quiet landscape leads the mind to pleasing thoughts of comfort, of the blessings of peace, and of innocent, uncorrupted human enjoyment. We do not mean to say, by this absolute idea of beauty existing in the mind, that there is a distinct æsthetic faculty or power in the mind, else there could not be such innumerable varieties of taste among different people; but what we mean is, that there is in every mind, even the most uncultivated (and, of course, incomparably more in the cultivated), a certain idea or perception of beauty, which, when it is realized, produces pleasure. The rudest sailor takes pleasure in the beautiful proportions of a fine vessel. Now, if the intuitive perception of beauty had not first existed in the mind, how could it have been cultivated even in this one respect? The source of the beautiful, whether it is simple or complex, whether made up of a single, or of many, elements, exists in the mind itself; real beauty is the reflection of inward ideas and sensations called forth by outward objects. Of course this sense of beauty sprang from the mind's Original, and who is Himself the τὸ καλόν, as he is the τὸ ἀγαθόν; for, as a modern writer says, "The summit of the beautiful is the true." All the works of God would appear beautiful, were we placed in the position of God, and could clearly see those principles of order, harmony, proportion, fitness, unity — that beautiful plan — upon which all is made. These hidden principles of beauty which God has impressed upon nature objectively, and subjectively upon the human mind, are for us to study, as far as they can be discovered. It is thought that a true advance has been made, especially by German writers on æsthetics, upon the Platonic idea, in this respect — that the objective should be joined to the

subjective, the real to the ideal, for the production of beauty; that though beauty does not reside in the object itself, but rather in the idea of the mind that perceives it, yet that this idea would not be sufficient to produce beauty, unless it formed itself upon, or discovered itself in, or expressed itself through, some real form. It must come out of its subjectivity to produce real beauty, as God himself did in Christ, in order to produce a beautiful life; it must take a form that corresponds to this idea in the mind, and, above all, in the divine mind. *Beauty, therefore, to be perfect, requires form as well as conception;* and there is the beautiful form in which every idea, or every pure truth, manifests itself. It does not manifest itself with the highest degree of perfection, unless it takes *that* particular form. There is, then, the fit, the beautiful form, awaiting every true idea; and it is the business of the artist, or creator, to discover this. So far, then, as the orator or the preacher is an artist, this is his business — to discover the fit and beautiful form of his conception of truth, or of any given truth; and this is right, because it is God's own way of working. Some rhetorical writers have expressed themselves clearly on this point. "Oratory must therefore, of necessity, express beauty, in order to its perfection. This cannot be said of the product of any mechanical art."[1] "Taste is nothing but the selection of the befitting and the adapted, guided by ethical ideas. Its proper home, therefore, is within the sphere of eloquence. But eloquence, in respect to taste, must always differ from poetry, in that, in the case of eloquence, the selection of the befitting and adapted is accompanied with the *design* of exciting affection; while taste in the poet, on the contrary, is a quality that works without any design in view, except the mere production of beauty."[2]

If, therefore, the principle of beauty enters into the highest affection toward God, if it serves to render truth more

[1] Day's Rhetoric, p. 21. [2] Theremin's Essay, p. 132.

attractive, if it is found in the Scriptures, and if it exists absolutely in the human mind, and, therefore, of course, primarily in the divine mind, it is a proper object (in its place) of attention and study to the preacher of divine truth.

We have said that the principle of beauty could not be considered as forming by itself a separate faculty or department of the mind, but that rather it seems to depend upon, or to be the combined result of, certain intuitive tastes, perceptions, laws, or principles of the mind, which are fitted to be called into exercise by whatever corresponds to them in outer objects, by whatever is calculated to draw them out, or give them expression. Still there is one faculty of the mind which does peculiarly preside over the whole field of the æsthetical, and that is, the *imagination*, whose use and place in preaching no one will deny.

The imagination, according to Coleridge, is "*that power of the finite mind which* (*as far as possible*) *corresponds to the creative power in the infinite mind, and which struggles to idealize and unify all objects of perception.*"

This noble faculty, which idealizes and perfects, which combines many perceptions into one new and living whole, enters largely into all the æsthetic arts, and cannot be disregarded by the preacher, any more than by the poet or painter. That is what gives one preacher's sermon a freshness, originality, and beauty of form, which another preacher's sermon, of equal force of thought, entirely lacks. It is this that, more than anything else (rhetorically speaking), takes a sermon out of the commonplace, and makes it individual. It makes a new mental creation, though it may add nothing to the actual stock of knowledge which existed before. But it casts ideas into new forms — more beautiful and powerful forms.

The preacher's imagination should be shown in this renewing power which is infused into his thought itself, rather than in any peculiar use of startling metaphors, or of brilliant

flights of fancy; but the greatest preachers since the apostle Paul's day have been distinguished for the presence of the imaginative faculty in a marked degree. *Chrysostom's* imagination led him into the living fields of illustration, and his illustrations are as homely and vivid as when they were first spoken to the great congregations in Antioch and Byzantium. *Augustine's* imagination was an inward fire, that lighted up spiritual realms with a glow like that of his own African landscape. *Luther's* imagination made unseen things real — more real than the things of sight. *Jeremy Taylor's* imagination was truly imperial; and one cannot open his pages without coming into the presence of new and resplendent forms of a fresh, opulent creation; of a superabundance, indeed, of imagery, but so genuine, and the healthy product of such sound and substantial thought, that it resembles beautiful clusters of grapes, which we feed upon while we enjoy the beauty that is so varied and rich a growth of generous nature. *John Howe's* imagination entered into his most abstruse speculations, and now and then, as in his Living Temple, led him into noble and extended imagery. *Robert Hall's* imagination sustained him through the most elevated reasoning upon moral themes. *Edward Irving*, who, with all his errors, was a great preacher, had an imagination at times Miltonic, and it was so regarded by his friend Coleridge. *Whitefield's* imagination was extremely vivid, inflaming his whole language, and making it blaze with a meaning and fire which now seem dull, compared to the moment of delivery. Among our own great preachers, *Jonathan Edwards* manifested this faculty in a more undemonstrative and hidden way, not so much in his forms of language as in the power of pure speculation, of projecting or creating for himself an ideal world of theory. *John Mason*, too, was not wanting in this power which animated his reasoning faculties. *Lyman Beecher* had a vigorous imagination, which made his method of speaking and argument quite original, and his preaching "logic on fire."

There has been, heretofore, it may be, a too great curbing of the imagination in our New England style of preaching, and thus a loss of power; for the imagination is the mainspring of invention in the orator or writer; and when the imagination is once fired, all the other faculties of the mind are set in motion. But we would speak of the imagination in this connection particularly, because it enables the preacher to produce the first and perhaps greatest result of the working of the æsthetical principle in a sermon, viz., *unity of form*. We would mention this, then, as the first essential principle of taste, viewed in relation to a discourse.

(1.) *Unity of form.* It is thought that Augustine, in his Treatise on Beauty, which has been lost, made "the beauty of all objects to depend on their unity, or on the perception of the principle or design which fixed the relations of the various parts, and presented them to the intellect or imagination as one harmonious whole."[1] Although this is a partial theory, yet it recognizes the chief property of every beautiful object of nature and true work of art. A range of mountains, an oak tree, the group of the Laocoön, the Transfiguration by Raphael, the interior of the Milan Cathedral, though each composed of many, even myriad, parts, yet make but one impression; they give the idea of one creative mind by which they were formed. In the greatest poems, also, how extremely simple is the creative fiat which runs through them, and organizes their numberless details into one grand whole, as in the Iliad, the Prometheus Vinctus, and the Paradise Lost! A child could tell the story of each almost in a breath.

This unifying power in these great works, and in all true works of art, is doubtless that of the imagination, as Coleridge defines it.

In works of thought and reflection, as in a sermon, the imagination seeks after complete representations of truth;

[1] Encyclop. Brit., Beauty.

even as Schiller defines the object of true literary composition to be "to exhibit the universal in the particular." The orator or preacher should strive, through the force of his own mind, to give wholeness of form to the subject, causing it to stand out like a finished statue, apart from all others, with nothing to be added, and nothing to be taken away. But it is only when the creative imagination has brooded over a subject, has vitalized it with its own free spirit, and has wrought it together in the heat of its thought, that this beautiful result is produced. This was the power of *Dr. Chalmers*. His imagination, which was his prime intellectual faculty as a preacher, was usually employed in developing, enhancing, and amplifying *one* idea, one truth of the divine word, so that it stood out at last in its majestic proportions to attract by its beauty or to overpower by its magnitude. His sermons are deep practical contemplations of truth flowing out from one central thought that opens into the divine word itself; they spread out and spread out, till each becomes, as it were, a lake, or a sea, on which the hearers' minds are lifted up and borne onward.

This vital unity of form, and fresh original completeness, are particularly seen in the sermons of the late F. W. Robertson. They attract by their inherent nobleness. In Dr. Bushnell's sermons we see an exhibition of this same clear, bold bodying forth of thought, this plastic power of the imagination, which the dry scientific intellect cannot reach. Will not an audience be impressed by the shortest living sermon of this kind more than by the most elaborate and dull scientific treatise that was ever preached? There must be thought, but it must be thought in a living form. No one wishes to see truth dissected, but truth alive. No one cares to see the *disjecta membra* of Osiris, but the living divinity. In Sydney Smith's witty words, "Is it a rule of oratory to handle the most sublime truths in the driest (and most technical) manner? Is sin to be taken from men as Eve was from Adam — by casting them into a deep sleep?"

Another principal characteristic of the æsthetical element in preaching is, —

(2.) *Grace of movement.* "Grace" is from *gratus*, free, or that which agrees with *willingly*, which is congruous, which moves in harmony. It consists of an harmonious arrangement of parts, so that all move easily. It is what Schiller calls "the play movement," as contrasted with the movement by rule. This unconstrained movement of the mind should run through the sermon. All traces of work and painful labor should be taken out of it. All stiff and unnatural juxtapositions of ideas or sentiments should be removed. The thought should flow freely, even if not rapidly. The audience, though aroused to active thought, should not be called upon to think the subject out *de origine*, laboriously, with the speaker. He should give them the results rather than the processes of his thought. There may be a world of hard labor bestowed upon the sermon — the more the better; but this should not be displayed. The sweat of toil should be wiped from it. A free, animated, and even joyous movement should appear through it all. It may be solemn, but should not be heavy. All men love to be lured into this sense of perfect freedom in a discourse — to believe that all is natural and unforced. Even if they must perceive that a sermon is the fruit of great previous study, yet for the moment they would believe that it is the spontaneous outpouring of the speaker's own soul. The preacher should strive to be an unbound man, not one forced to think and speak what another man thinks and speaks; but all men should see that he is himself, that his thoughts are free, and spoken because they are his own. Then he will be graceful. Freedom is necessary to grace. The intellect creates method; the imagination, unity; but the *heart*, grace. Grace comes from inward sympathy. Grace, looked at in this sense, is not a weak quality in a speaker; it is nothing less than power moving freely. Grace springs from that aroused and joyful energy of the mind which is one of its deepest

sources of power. When a speaker moves with this free and graceful energy, he carries his audience with him. We will mention but one other quality of good taste in preaching: —

(3.) *Propriety of thought and expression.* We mean here a proper form, rather than substance, of thought. Propriety has been defined to be "a fine and true conformity to all relations which may surround an object." These may be relations of truth, time, place, circumstance, or whatsoever is befitting the right treatment of the particular theme in hand. This quality of beauty would lead the preacher to fall into no error, (*a.*) in the choice of his subject; (*b.*) in the fitness of his arguments; (*c.*) in the perception of the true character of the occasion; (*d.*) in the adaptations of thought and illustration to the intellectual and spiritual state of his audience. All truth is good, but one truth is fitter than another at a certain time. In the treatment of certain subjects there are sets of ideas congruous and totally incongruous to those subjects. In the treatment of texts, this principle of "propriety" is peculiarly needed; a text which breathes the hope and joy of the gospel should not be made a sledge-hammer to crush the mind with the terrors of the law. The fine cultivation of this æsthetical principle of "propriety" is to be particularly seen in a preacher's illustrations, and in the moderation and control of the wayward and violent imagination.

We might speak of many other important æsthetical principles which enter into oratory, and even sacred oratory, such as *proportion*, *disposition*, *neatness*, *correctness*, *color*, *tone*, *light and shade*, *novelty*, *variety*, *sublimity*, *expression*, and, above all, *truth;* but we cannot here go farther into this subject. Many of the principles of good taste in writing and speaking will necessarily be noticed when we treat more particularly of Style.

The best way to cultivate the æsthetic sense, or good taste, is by a constant study of *nature*. Goethe says that

all any artist has to do is to study and imitate nature; and though this remark may be too sweeping, — for nature itself is, in some sense, imperfect, and matter could not manifest to us the perfect idea of God, — yet from nature we draw those elementary principles of art which the human mind, made by God, is capable of improving upon, from the higher ideal within. Dr. Chalmers was a genuine lover of natural scenery; and the influence of the Scottish mountains and lakes, which were familiar to him, and revisited by him on every possible occasion, is perceptible in the nobleness, and, sometimes, sublimity, of his style.[1] Calvin, on the contrary, seems to have caught little or nothing from the influence of the grander scenery about his home. The careful study of one or more of the fine arts, such as painting or architecture, especially the last, which is an accurate and scientific art, is also highly improving to the æsthetic sense. "*Etenim omnes artes, quæ ad humanitatem pertinent, habent quoddam commune vinculum, et quasi cognitione quadam inter se continentur.*"[2] A study of the best poets develops and cultivates the æsthetic quality of the mind. Above all, let the heart be pure and joyful, and it will see beauty in all things. Ruskin says, "The sensation of beauty (that is, the highest beauty) is dependent on a pure, right, and open state of the heart." There is everlasting beauty in the works of God. In the meditation of his word and works we best reach the source of the beautiful. Do we not feel that in the perfect life of God, to which, if we are good, we tend, all that is incongruous and earthly, all that is not truly beautiful, will vanish away?

[1] Hanna's Life of Chalmers, vol. iv., p. 450.
[2] Cicero, Pro Archia, I., 2.

SECOND DIVISION.

INVENTION AND STYLE.

§ 24. *Invention.*

Invention may be defined to be *the art of supplying and methodizing the subject-matter of a discourse.*

Its primary idea is, to discover, bring together, or supply the requisite material of thought, from whatever source; its subordinate idea, and one legitimately connected with it as far as the proper uses of rhetoric are concerned, is the right methodizing or arrangement of this material.

We will consider, briefly, the *sources of invention, and the qualities of the true subject.*

I. *The sources of invention.*

(*a.*) *Original power of thought.* This belongs to the mind, as mind; but it may be indefinitely increased through discipline and culture, since the more this original faculty of thought is trained, the stronger and richer it grows in invention, the greater its command of the sources and materials of thought. There are, it is true, vast differences in native mental power and fertility, in the primitive depth of the mental soil; but where there is native power of thought, a thorough and philosophical education serves to develop it, that it may bear more fruit of invention. Vinet says (Homiletics, p. 53), "But the most certain means of invention, as to the subject of discourse, is a truly philosophical culture."[1] In sermon-writing the well-disciplined mind, the mind trained to think, has a confident vigor in discovering and handling a subject which the untrained mind cannot have. A thoughtful mind, well disciplined, will be continually quarrying out for itself new subject-

[1] See also Quintilian's Inst., c. xix.

matter, since thought itself is, after all, the main principle and source of good writing.

(*b.*) *Acquired knowledge.* Out of nothing, nothing can be invented. There must first be the material for thought to work upon, and from which to draw forth the subject-matter of discourse before the writer or orator has any function. That material is truth, as it lies in its elemental conditions in nature and the moral universe, rewarding the sincere seeker, but eluding the final analysis. No one but God can create simple or original truth; yet man may lay hold of truth and use the truth while he cannot circumscribe or exhaust it. The broader the dominion of truth which the orator thus commands, the more of it he has actually made his own, the richer his sources of invention, and the wider his power and influence.[1]

We do not like to see barrenness in any writer, but in writing a sermon especially one should draw upon a full mind; he should be able to look down upon a subject in all its parts and relations, and should feel that his great embarrassment consists in coming at the specific theme of discourse, in defining, selecting, and arranging his material, rather than in being obliged to gather together matter enough to eke out a discourse. It is better not to attempt to write upon a subject than to write with a small and imperfect knowledge of it, which sometimes one may be forced to do, although this is not the way to nourish a rich invention. And this acquired knowledge, that is to be employed in invention, is not the gathering together of a crude, undigested mass of knowledge; but it requires an act of the mind to possess itself of this knowledge, to assimilate truth to the nourishment of the thinking power, to make it fit for use. This requires reflection — that profound meditation upon divine truth, without which there can be no rich, original preaching. It is not merely the preaching of truth,

[1] Quintilian's Inst., c. xxi.

but our own personal perception or apprehension of truth, the ripe fruitage of our own patient thinking upon truth, that is needed.

The great source of the preacher's acquired knowledge is *the word of God;* and he who studies this word daily, who digs in this field, who is constantly pursuing original investigations in this still fresh and fruitful soil, will never be at a loss for subjects of sermons. It is well that there is beginning to be a call for biblical preaching; this will immensely increase the variety of the material of preaching and the supply of the inventive faculty. The last review, the last new work on theology, the last published volume of essays or sermons, while suggestive, cannot afford preachers their source of supply; for all such materials are adventitious; they are not the *spring*, but only a reservoir whose waters soon dry up. The older Puritan preachers dwelt continually in the word and spirit of God, and thus they were fresh and original, sometimes startlingly bold, but profound in a spiritual sense, even if labored and incorrect in form. They preached, it is true, scholastically; but in substance and spirit they drew their main material from the Scriptures. There is an evangelic life in what they say, which must have seemed, at the time, like a direct prophecy, or a speaking of God's spirit through their minds to men.

(*c.*) *The process of analysis and reasoning.* As meditation upon truth arouses the inventive faculty, the more logical power of definition, analysis, and comparison, gradually leads invention to settle down upon some definite result of thought, some distinct and comprehensive subject; it conducts to the apprehension of those elements or principles of truth which lie behind all knowledge. Many preachers' minds are sufficiently fertile in subjects for sermons, but, lacking the habit of philosophic thinking, the cultivated analytic power, they fail to look the subject through, or to come at the real subject, at all. They are thus led

also to superficiality in the treatment of subjects, and are rich only in the mere discovery of novel themes.

II. *The qualities of the true subject.*

(*a.*) *It should possess unity of subject and object.* We have spoken already of unity of form in an æsthetic point of view; but the very matter and essence of a discourse should be one. This forms its life; and a discourse can have, like a man, but one life, not two or more. We naturally say, "The subject of this discourse is so and so." If we should say, "The subjects of this discourse are so and so," would our hearers expect to be persuaded or impelled to any particular duty? A sermon, above all, should have but one foundation theme, though capable, it may be, of many different aspects and divisions; for a sermon is not a mere work of art; it is infinitely more: it is a practical work directed to a moral end, calculated to act impressively upon the will and affections of the hearer; it should have, therefore, but one subject, and should aim at one impression, or it loses its moral power.

The sermon may sometimes treat of complex truths; but these should be comprehended in some broader truth, and all the thoughts should be bound together into one synthetic whole. The discourse delivered by the preacher has something to accomplish; it is directed to a certain end; it is to carry a certain point; it has an earnest mission; it does not talk about truth, but it preaches the truth which is fitted to convert men's souls; therefore there should be not only unity of subject — unity in the very substance of the thought, — but unity of object, unity of aim. There may be a wide subject, but there should be a narrower object toward which it is directed and is made to converge. According to Vinet, in order to have unity in a sermon, it must be reducible to a doctrinal proposition, which is readily transformed into a practical proposition; and every sermon, even an expository one, should partake more or less

of this unity of subject and object, this oneness of substance and aim. It is true that the sermons of Augustine, and of the early fathers of the church, seem to go upon the principle of imparting as much truth as possible at the time, without any marked attempt at unity, and this was better suited to an earlier and less exactly thoughtful age; but, as a general principle, at all times and under all circumstances, the laws of the mind teach us that we cannot, in speaking for the purpose of persuasion, attain to any object, or accomplish any definite end, unless we keep that object in view and steadily pursue it. We should not only, therefore, have a theme, but we should clearly apprehend it in all its bearings, so that while following it out, while discussing subordinate and related subjects, while pursuing definite and individual methods of treatment, we should not forget either the one main subject or the one main object of our discourse; and these two, in a certain sense, should be one.

(*b.*) *It should be one's own.* The term "invention" presupposes this: for to invent, one must, in a sense, originate. Whatever one produces should be the genuine product of his own thinking — not that he may not receive help from other sources, but his intellectual products should be the honest fruit of his own brain. This is the happiness and reward of literary labor, and it loses its stimulus and pleasurable excitement where there is not this consciousness of independent, and, in a true sense, original invention; and if this is true of any species of literary composition or public discourse, it is true of the sermon. Let us ask *in what way true originality is violated.* We would say negatively — *not in using old truths;* for no one can make a new truth. Even the discovery of a new truth seems to be reserved for the few minds on which epochs turn, though, indeed, there is no monopoly here. The truths of the Bible, above all other truths, are common property to all preachers and men. Again, *not in using old arguments or proofs.* The

old arguments are generally the best; they are the results of the best thinking of the best minds; they have become the property of all. The interests of truth itself demand that it should not lose the support of the best arguments, the old and well-tried proofs, and lean upon weaker proofs merely because they are new. Yet again, *not in taking subjects that have been preached upon by others.* One should not be fastidious in this. The most important subjects will be those most preached upon. And there *are* certain subjects, which not to preach upon would be a clear failure of duty; and, obviously, no one has an exclusive right of property in the truths and subjects of the Bible. There are some peculiarly original forms in which even homiletical subjects have been stated, which it would be absurd and wrong for a preacher to repeat, inasmuch as they are not his own. Thus Dr. Bushnell's sermon upon "Every man's life a plan of God," upon the text in Isaiah 45: 5, "*I have girded thee, though thou hast not known me*," is stamped, in the very subject of it, with an original ownership.

True originality of invention may be violated, positively, by *employing the thoughts, words, and method of another, without, in some way, giving due credit for it.* The violation consists not in using another's thoughts, or those which bear the unmistakable stamp of ownership, but in not candidly acknowledging their source. One must use the result of others' thinking to a certain extent, for he cannot think all things *de origine*, and he is the heir of ages of thought; he may sometimes even unconsciously employ ideas and trains of thought which belong peculiarly to another mind, whose source he has forgotten, and which he uses unwittingly as his own; there may be striking coincidences in his own thinking and that of another man's; but consciously to set forth as his own the thoughts, words, and inventions of another, which have not confessedly become common property, and which belong of right to one man,

and to give that impression to others — this is a clear violation of original invention, and of the first principles of morality.

In what, then, may originality of invention be said to consist? It consists, in the first place, *in enunciating truth which is the subject of our own mental perception and conviction.* It is not preaching truth because it is held and believed by others. Old truth must be made new, or must receive a renewed form, by passing through the heat and pressure of our own minds. It must be assimilated into the very body and essence of our own thought. It must be ours, just as much ours as it was the apostle Paul's or Pascal's. We must ourselves preach that *we* do know, and testify that we have seen and believed. If we speak of *thoughts*, or *ideas*, in contradistinction from *truths*, we see at once that there are many ideas that have sprung up in original minds, that are peculiar to these minds, and that bear the lineaments of their origin. These cannot be run through our own minds, and come out with a new stamp of our own upon them: they must be left as they are; and if used by us, their authorship should be acknowledged. Individual thoughts and ideas about a truth, and new aspects of it discovered by different minds, are different from the truth itself, which belongs to all minds.

Again, it consists *in treating a subject independently, or in using arguments, proofs, and methods, which are the result of our own thinking and investigation.* We may sometimes take old arguments, but we do not take an argument because it is old, or because another has used it; but because we think it is sound, and because we have come upon it in our own thinking, and know its value. We occupy no other man's precise point of view. We use an argument because our own judgment approves of it; because, even if we have not invented it, we have at least felt its power and our need of it. This principle applies particularly to the plans of sermons. The plan of a sermon is so connected with our whole process of thought

upon a subject, it is in fact so truly the reproduction of that process of thought, and is in every way so individual and vital, that for one preacher to use bodily the plan of another man as his own, without making it known, is inexcusable. Therefore, all books which purport to be aids in forming plans of sermons, are moral nuisances, and should be thoroughly condemned. They are the excuses of indolence. This is not saying that a preacher may not legitimately and honestly derive suggestions and helps from others in forming his plan of a sermon, even from those perhaps, who have written upon the same theme, although that is always a hazardous thing, and one should avoid reading another sermon upon the same subject before writing his own.

Still again, originality consists *in inventing subjects that are really new*. Truth is so large, and, indeed, limitless in its range, that one may still be an inventor. He can discover new forms of truth, and make new combinations of forms that have never before existed; and that is a wonderful gain in preaching. There is such a plodding on in familiar ruts of thought, that something really new has all the effect of suddenly turning into a by-road in the woods, that refreshes and awakes the mind; for nothing so delights the mind, even the mind of the uncultivated, as a new view of truth. Freshness of thought is not a mere weak or dazzling novelty. Vinet has some pregnant remarks upon this point. "There is, then," he says, "legitimate novelty — a novelty even of subjects — not of doctrines, but of themes. By this means, art, which is an affair of humanity, renovates itself; the gospel is unchangeable, but it is divine. In order to attain the novelty of which we speak, genius is not necessary, and the preacher has only to open his eyes and observe. Let him not confine himself to a general and abstract idea of man, but let him study the men who are before him, and to whom he speaks. If he will but take this pains, he will be new. The study is a difficult one, requiring constant attention —

one in which zeal will sustain and direct him, but from which he is not to be excused."

Lastly, originality of invention consists *in employing one's own language and style.* Who can be in any sense original who does not give the impress and superscription of his individual style to his production? Who can doubt the originality of the writing of Chalmers, or of Robert South? Good or bad, true or false, it was their own.

In concluding this point, we would say, that two great and legitimate sources of originality to the preacher are original exegesis of the Scriptures, and the bringing of one's own experience and observation of life to bear in the treatment of spiritual truth.

(*c.*) *It must be, in the case of the preacher, Christian truth.* This is required, if for no other reason, for the sake of those whom he addresses. They are to be won to God by means of Christian truth, and they can be won in no other way. Christ, as the way of eternal life, must be in the truth that really converts the soul. As far as the hearers are concerned, there is no room for violating this rule. Whatever does not partake essentially of the nature of Christian truth is not the true subject of the preacher's instructions. The preacher, besides this, is also positively commissioned and commanded to preach Christian truth, summed up in the brief sentence, "*Christ and him crucified.*" This, it is true, comprehends a vast sweep of truth, as may be illustrated in the preaching of Paul, in which Christ formed the subject-matter — all beginning and ending in Christ. Yet how broad, doctrinally and ethically, was the range of Paul's preaching! It goes to the ordering of our entire human life below, and rises into the sublime mysteries of the life which is to come. What, then, let us ask more particularly, *is meant by Christian truth?*

1. It is *that truth which may be assimilated into Christianity.* In one sense, all truth may become part of Christianity; but whatever of truth can be just as well treated of and

discussed, if Christianity were not, or were out of the way, could not properly be called Christian truth. Christianity could hardly, for example, assimilate to itself such a truth as the science of *botany*, so as to make it an exclusive subject for the pulpit, although botany may be used most happily in the way of illustration, and even of direct teaching, whenever the natural works of God are treated of; for the principles of botany, as far as the science is concerned, could be just as well treated of by a heathen as a Christian, and by a natural philosopher as a Christian preacher; therefore it is more proper for the scientific lecture than for the pulpit.

2. It is *that truth which tends to edify*. Whatever is addressed exclusively to the intellect, or the feelings, or the imagination, or the prudential nature, and does not afford nutriment to the spiritual nature, cannot form the true subject-matter of preaching. There must be the bread of life for the soul to feed upon — a fragment of that eternal truth revealed by God's Spirit to the soul. It must be the genuine word of God. Truths, therefore, which end in this earthly sphere of things, which are purely intellectual, scientific, or social truths, should be but incidentally treated of in the pulpit. It is good to apply Christian truth to worldly affairs, and to inculcate wise maxims in regard to the daily business and pursuits of life; but to preach an entire sermon upon "business thrift," without a higher aim or a deeper moral intent, would be an inexcusable secularization of the pulpit. In like manner scientific subjects which do not nourish the moral or spiritual nature, even if they have a true relation to the general good and enlightenment of men, were better discussed in their own proper places and methods. "In interpreting the soul, and in revealing God, Jesus aimed at more than simply communicating new and ennobling knowledge to the world. What humanity needed was, not merely to understand God; it needed still more to learn how the soul might be restored

to God, and how God might dwell in the soul."[1] The pulpit may be, at times, scientific in its treatment of the higher truth, but it should not sell itself to scientific form; and even theological scientific discussion may become barren and wholly out of place in the pulpit. While it is true that subjects which treat of the means of true social progress may very properly be introduced into the Christian pulpit, yet subjects which end altogether in questions relating to the principles, arts, and laws of general civilization, in which man in general is discussed and not man in particular, — these should not, ordinarily, form its exclusive themes; such themes are better reserved for the lecture than the sermon. A subject, in fine, which has not, or cannot possibly be made to have, a decidedly spiritual and Christian bearing, which does not radically influence character, which does not prepare the way for Christ to come in the soul, and which does not concern the interests of his eternal kingdom should not be made a complete and separate subject for the pulpit. Every sermon need not enunciate Christian dogma, but every sermon should breathe the spirit of the gospel, and bear its message of peace to the soul. It should come under that new system of truth, that higher manifestation of the divine in the human, which has Christ for its spiritual centre. It should not be preaching purely to the reason, or to the logical faculty, or to the æsthetical faculty; but Christ should speak in it to man's spirit, impelling to duty, repentance, and a holy life.

Christian truth, which should be thus the subject of our preaching, may be viewed more specifically still, as consisting of three parts: *Christian doctrine*, *Christian morality*, and *Christian experience*.

1. *Christian doctrine*. Here we find the main subject-matter, or the real staple of preaching. This doctrine is simply the teaching or truth of God which is necessary for

[1] Young's Christ in History, p. 144.

the nourishing of the soul. But even this Christian doctrine, as we have said, when treated in a scientific manner, may become the mere nutriment of the intellect, and not of the soul. While, therefore, there should be enough of theological discussion in a sermon to present the subject clearly, to remove its difficulties, to develop it in an orderly manner; yet, after all, the discussion of truth is not the end of the sermon, which is to awake, edify, renew the soul. As a general rule, broad synthetical views of truth are the best. Paul, though a born dialectician, will be found, when thoroughly studied, to present doctrinal truth in an almost totally unscientific, and oftentimes even illogical form; for while he preached doctrine, it was rather in the living forms and teachings of the Spirit of God, than in those systematic methods which we commonly associate with the idea of "doctrine"—good for the treatise, but not good for the pulpit.

Dr. Alexander thus remarks on this point: "I am impressed with the importance of choosing great subjects for sermons, such as creation, the deluge, the atonement, the last things. A man should begin early to grapple with great subjects. An athlete (2 Tim. 2: 5) gains might only by great exertions. So that a man does not overstrain his powers, the more he wrestles the better; but he *must* wrestle, not merely take a great subject, and dream over it, and play with it."

We should agree generally with this suggestion; but still we would find the great subject in the text itself, or in some portion of the divine word, rather than to find a text for the subject, even if it be of a doctrinal character. The "great subjects" that Dr. Alexander speaks of will come more readily through concentrated thought upon some definite passage of God's word than through the choice of a great subject, commonly so called. It is better, for example, to find the doctrine of the atonement, as it lies originally and naturally, in the Epistle to the Romans, and be filled and in-

spired by the study of this whole Epistle, than to deliberately write a sermon on the abstract and theological doctrine of the "atonement," and preach upon it in the ordinary formal mode of discussion. "In our anxiety to set forth a sound code of truth, we have been directing men, for example, to the naked formula of justification, rather than to Him by whom we are saved, and who all the day long stretches out his arms to receive the returning sinner. We have been teaching men, perhaps, to trust to a *system*, instead of reposing on a personal Saviour."[1] The most profitable form of preaching is that which, drawn fresh from scriptural sources, unites the doctrinal and the practical, and recognizes the fact that the end of Christian doctrine is to teach men how to live a good and holy life.

Controversial preaching of Christian doctrine is rarely profitable. It may be sometimes needful; but, generally speaking, the setting forth of the true doctrine is the best way to refute doctrinal error; for a minister of the gospel is not called to be a heresy-hunter; but he should, by God's aid, make such a blaze of light about him that falsehood cannot live in it.

Preaching upon *Christian evidences* is generally considered to be useful; yet, after all, is not the best evidence of Christianity the manifestation of the truth in the love of it? The defensive side of truth should certainly not be dwelt upon too long in a pulpit which should speak with assurance and authority. Why should there be a timidly apologetic tone forever going forth from our Christian pulpits, as if the Bible were an unknown book that needs to be always proving its divine authority? or as if it had not been attested by ages of light? or as if the books and words of men, of the great thinkers of past and present times, brought together, could equal in creative power and brightness one ray of the sun of God's word? or as if Christ were an

[1] Oxenden's Treatise, p. 109.

obscure personage still traversing the hills of Judea in peasant guise, and not having where to lay his head? If Christianity has not proved itself by this time to be true, it will never prove itself to be so; and therefore we would have preachers take higher ground, and prove the truth of Christianity by setting it forth more faithfully and comprehensively. They may be assured that this is their one duty, and that Christianity is able to take care of its own evidences.

We do not say by this that the preacher should not study the Christian evidences, and that it is not good for him to establish these in his mind, and to bring them into his preaching and pastoral instruction, for confirmation in the truth; but we do say that to preach too much on the evidences will make people finally begin to doubt and to question. It is better to preach Christ, and trust to the gospel to prove itself. In pretty much the same category we would place preaching upon *natural theology*. Vinet considers that, under the Christian system, there is no such thing, properly speaking, as natural religion. He thinks that Christianity takes up, completes, and transforms natural truths, so that they become Christian truths. Undoubtedly, no Christian preacher should treat of natural religion excepting from a Christian point of view; he should not descend to the former level of uninspired truth; he should show, rather, that Christianity *is* the natural religion, or that it has in perfection all that nature may have in its elements, and something infinitely more. Christianity can reason down upon natural religion better than natural religion can reason up to Christianity; for while nature, as the creation of God, and thus, in one sense, the manifestation of God, may not be neglected, yet the Christian minister should not lose sight of his higher *Christian* vantage ground, and preach natural religion or natural theology. In fine, the great permanent theme of Christian doctrinal preaching is, *that fact of human redemption, in all its wide-spread ramifications and relations, which was wrought out through*

the incarnation, life, atoning death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. How many congregations languish under the preaching of eloquent divines, because they are not simply and earnestly taught the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, wherein are the beginnings of all spiritual life; for Christ alone is *the life*, whatever else there is of knowledge, eloquence, or philosophy.

2. *Christian morality.* Christ himself made one chief element of his preaching to consist in the right interpretation of the moral law — the law of duty and life; and here is to be one of the reforms of the pulpit — that it should be more practical, leading to "*charity out of a pure heart;*" that it should deal with *the whole of life* in a Christian point of view — with man's personal relations as son, husband, father, friend, neighbor, citizen, business man, and member of the human brotherhood. "We want a Christianity that is Christian across counters, over dinner-tables, behind the neighbor's back as in his face. We want a Christianity that we can find in the temperance of the meal, in moderation of dress, in respect for authority, in amiability at home, in veracity and simplicity in mixed society. We want fewer gossiping, slandering, gluttonous, peevish, conceited, bigoted Christians. To make them effectual, all our public religious measures, institutions, benevolent agencies, missions, need to be managed on a high-toned, scrupulous, and unquestionable scale of honor, without evasion or partisanship, or overmuch of the serpent's cunning. The hand that gives away the Bible must be unspotted from the world. The money that sends the missionary to the heathen must be honestly earned. In short, both the arms of the church — justice and mercy — must be stretched out, working for man, strengthening the brethren, or else your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins."[1]

Dr. Chalmers was eminently a preacher of practical morality. "He set his face against every form of evil, both

[1] Dr. F. D. Huntington.

in the pulpit and out of it. He particularly pressed upon country people thorough honesty and uprightness, and the practice of the law of love by abstaining from all malice and evil speaking. The ostentation of flaming orthodoxy, or talk of religious experience which was not borne out by the life, was the object of his thorough abhorrence." When he preached his commercial sermons in Glasgow, business men would leave the church with expressions of violent hostility, but they would be present when he preached the succeeding discourse. To tell these men of influence and high social standing that their city was given up to the idolatry of money, and that where the love of money is, the love of God could not be — to show them how even business integrity might coexist with a corrupt heart, and that this fair show of virtue might spring from pure selfishness — required no common courage.

Christian morality should not be confounded with natural virtue, for morality may be treated in a false way in the pulpit, by disconnecting it from the life-springs of Christian faith. "Morals can seldom gain living energy without the impulsive force derived from spirituals. Plato and Cicero may indeed talk of the surpassing beauty of virtue; nor do we doubt that a man's own self-respect may make him choose to die, rather than live degraded in his own eyes by deviating from his ideal of right conduct. Let old stoicism be confessed to be noble and honorable; yet it makes the mind too exclusively reflexive, and engenders pride and self-confidence. Virtue is an abstraction, a set of wise rules, — not a person, — and cannot call out affection, as an exterior to the soul does. On the contrary, God is a person; and the love of him is of all affections far the most energetic in exciting us to realize our highest idea of moral excellence, and in clearing the moral sight. Other things being equal (a condition not to be forgotten), a spiritual man will hold a higher and purer morality than a mere moralist. Not only does duty manifest itself to him as an ever-expanding principle,

but, since a larger part of duty becomes pleasant and easy when performed under the stimulus of love, the will is enabled to concentrate itself more in that which remains difficult, and greater power of performance is attained. Hence, 'what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,' is fulfilled in those 'who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.'"[1]

Moral duty may be treated by the preacher philosophically, or rationally, or prudentially, and yet not vitally, as touched by the Christian principle, which concerns itself with the inner rule of right, and the mind's choice to do right or wrong. The virtue of temperance may be thus made a stoical, or political, or hygienic virtue, and be violently torn out of the circle of Christian virtues and of that Christian character which is moulded freely by the great law of righteousness and love.

There is also the interesting field of the application of Christian morality to questions of government, citizenship, and politics. De Tocqueville says, "It appears to me that morality is divisible into two portions, both equally important in the eyes of God, but which his ministers do not teach with equal energy. One respects private life — the duties of mankind, a father, children, husbands and wives; the other respects public life — the duties of every citizen to his country and to the portion of the human race to which he specially belongs. Am I mistaken in thinking that our clergy care much about the first branch of morality, and little about the second?" As to the question of preaching upon *politics*, it is true that human politics, in the ordinary sense of the term, should *not* form the theme of the preacher of eternal truth; but a higher idea of the subject of politics viewed as the application of Christian ethics to human affairs and government, as the life-principle of the state — this is a different thing; and here it comes fairly under De Tocqueville's second division of public morality. Upon this sub-

[1] F. W. Newman, The Soul, p. 124.

ject the preacher is conscientiously bound, under proper limitations, and according to the proportions of truth, to bestow his thought and give his instructions. And he is the more bound to do so when those instructions are peculiarly needed, when public opinion has gone wrong, when there is a decided and dangerous perversion of right principles in relation to civil matters, when men and the state have become oppressive and unjust, and when liberty is imperilled. Then the preacher should stand up boldly, and proclaim the right, even as did John the Baptist, Peter, and Paul. This is not only the preacher's privilege, but his duty; he would be basely derelict in duty not to do so. As an American, he would be false to the history and example of a Puritan pulpit, which, in the Old World and the New, has ever upheld the cause of freedom. And yet that is not advocating political preaching, of which, it may be, there has been too much in the past. Dr. South was what we should call a "political preacher," even as, doubtless, many who opposed him were "political preachers;" for men like South fought for their party in the pulpit, and with all kinds of weapons; and their minds were evidently more ardently engaged in these partisan conflicts than in the great ends of preaching the gospel.

To speak more particularly of questions of *moral reform*, while these should enter into, yet even these should not form the main substance and material of, true preaching; for the preacher should be seen to have the deeper mind to delight to make Christ all in all; and he should speak on these subjects of moral reform as Christ's messenger, as expressing his pure and loving will; for Christian morality is, after all, nothing but the carrying out and the universal application of the law of love. "This is the particular vice of preachers. They are set to teach people the right way, and, of course, they have to assert the wrong way; and unless a preacher is careful to study the effect of these things on his mind, he will come into that state in which he

lashes and lashes and lashes with his tongue those that go astray; and, if he gives his attention to public affairs, he will be a volcano belching out fires of indignation against evil, so that the whole impression that he leaves on the minds of those who hear him is one of gigantic fault-finding. A minister before a congregation may preach against sin till he has set every man to sinning; for the way to make men better is not to hold up evil for criticism, but to show forth the attractiveness of good."[1] There is a noticeable difference between being a Christian reformer and a Christian preacher, and the Christian preacher should be both; but he should be a preacher distinctively and primarily. "By the time a man has been a reformer ten or fifteen years, he is apt to be a fault-finding man. It is not always so. God be thanked that there have been such men as Clarkson and Wilberforce — men that took the devil by the throat, and caught nothing of his sulphur and fire; men that with all gentleness, and sweetness, and meekness, and forbearance, and Christian love, rebuked the most gigantic evil of their day and nation. But the temptation of those that go forth reforming sin is to become bitter, and censorious, and fault-finding."[2] Let a minister be, first of all, a preacher of Christian truth, and then he will, of necessity, be a reformer; let him look well to the positive side of truth — to the establishment of truth — and from this position let him attack the institutions of sin. In this way he will preserve his balance, and not become denunciatory, or lose the blessed charity of the gospel for human sins. With the conditions and limitations thus laid down, the gospel is to be applied freely, boldly, searchingly, to all relations of human life and society. Few American preachers have done this with more power than Dr. Channing, though in doctrinal views we entirely differ from him; but to him belongs the credit of

[1] Rev. Henry Ward Beecher in the Independent, 1860.
[2] Rev. H. W. Beecher.

nobly and freely applying in his preaching the principles of Christian ethics to matters of social, governmental, and public reform; and his sermons, in this respect, are still a model, not only in eloquent thought, but in the large sympathy which they manifest for the moral condition and prospects of the whole human family.

While thus advocating strongly the preaching of moral reform under the conditions that have been laid down, we would guard against any encouragement of that kind of minute police system of moral-reform preaching which pries into other men's business, which hectors and dragoons them into duty, and which labors to mend every little social abuse, error, and evil in the community, in this public way; but, on the contrary, we would advocate the idea that the truth itself should be faithfully, patiently, lovingly, fearlessly preached, and it will, in due time, correct those lesser faults and abuses.

3. *Christian experience.* We need not dwell upon this. Here is an opportunity for meditative and richly subjective preaching. One may follow here the windings of the water of the river of life, that hidden life of God in an individual experience of divine truth, which, taken out of the revealed word, forms the present, working, transforming power of the life of Christ in the soul of each believer.

Need there be any lack of subject-matter in such a wide field as that which has been glanced over? Need invention pause for a moment in discovering new, inspiring, and exhaustless themes for the pulpit?

In what has been said on invention, we have endeavored to show that while the vagaries, unlicensed luxuriance, and unbounded secularization of pulpit themes and of preaching should be much restricted, yet that the field of preaching might really be greatly enlarged, and rendered at the same time more profound and effective. It would be both more human and more divine. It would be more truly Christian preaching, — springing from the divine word, and saturated

with the new spirit of Christ, — not merely moral, scientific, philosophical, or sentimental. All life, all nature, all human relations, would be thrown open to the transforming power of Christ; the pulpit would be unbound, and responsible for its utterances to God alone; yet it would be devoted simply to the divine will, and to the glory of God in the saving of souls.

Rhetorically speaking, invention, more than anything else, shows the true artist; thus, rhetorically speaking, invention shows the true orator. Cicero makes much of invention in his De Oratore; and, highly as he regards the importance of style, he thinks that what an orator has to say, or the methodized subject-matter of discourse, is of far more importance. He divides oratory into five parts: "To invent what you have to say, to arrange what you have invented, to clothe it in proper language, then to commit it to memory, and at last to deliver it with due action and elocution."[1] If Cicero placed invention first, in regard to the mere orator, how much more important is it to the preacher of divine truth!

§ 25. *Style.*

"Style" is a complex term, and, therefore, definitions of style differ, and some of them are quite incomplete; for example, Webster's definition, that style is "the manner of writing with regard to language, or the choice and arrangement of words." That, however, it must be said, coincides with the ancient definition of style, which was, "the proper selection and arrangement of words," or, what amounted to the same thing, "elocution." Webster's definition, founded upon this ancient one, comprehends what we would mean by "*diction*."

Professor H. N. Day's definition of style is, "That part of rhetoric which treats of the expression of *thought* in language." Here the important idea of "thought" is added

[1] De Oratore, B. XI., p. 104.

to that of "language," or of "diction." Vinet goes farther still. He says, "Diction is not the whole man, while the *whole man* is the style;" or, in the familiar phrase of Buffon, "The style is the man."

Evidently, then, style is not merely the language, nor is it merely the verbal expression of thought; but it is the expression of the man himself through language. We would, therefore, prefer the following, as, perhaps, a more general and comprehensive definition: *Style is the expression in language of the thought, qualities, and spirit of the man himself.*

From this it would follow that a man who does not express *himself* — his individual thought and character — in his language has no "style," properly speaking; for it is not every piece of composition that has a "style," any more than every building.

Style is sometimes disparaged, and all effort to improve it is scouted; but to write clearly assists one to think clearly, since the effort to express one's self in the best way is itself a noble mental discipline. Cicero says that "writing is the most excellent modeller and teacher of oratory, and that men by speaking badly are sure of becoming bad speakers."[1]

Style, according to the definition we have given, is composed of two elements: first, of something *independent of the man himself, and common to all men, viz., language;* and, secondly, of something which *depends entirely upon the man himself, and his relations to those things which influence his style;* in other words, there are certain properties of style which are essential, and which chiefly relate to language; and there are other properties, which are originated, or, at least, colored, by the individual thought and mind of the writer, and by all his relations to other minds whom he addresses. These have been called the *invariable* and the *related* properties of style.

I. *The invariable properties of style.* These are proper-

[1] De Oratore, B. VII.

ties which enter, and must enter, into all good writing and speaking — into all true style; and surely, here one may profitably spend as much study as he can find time and opportunity to spend. He can always be perfecting himself in this respect. This part of style is an art to be acquired like any other art; for it relates more to the external and mechanical dexterity of the writer or speaker than to his inward thought and genius, which is created, rather than acquired; and yet even this more external character of style also depends largely upon the natural capacities and fitness of the mind. This part of style may all be comprised under the single idea of *language*.

Let us, then, consider language in relation to a discourse, or, according to our original definition of rhetoric, in relation to the spoken address.

We have already remarked upon the general theme of the Study of Language; we would now look at language more especially in its relations to the best style of public discourse — in a word, of preaching.

This theme can be divided into the *oral* and the *grammatical* properties of language.

1. *Oral properties of language.*

All language is originally intended to be spoken; it is, properly, *speech*. Even if written, and not spoken, the right principles of articulate sound must be preserved, and must still continue to govern it; for speech is the ultimate test of language, and it cannot possibly be the best language unless the judgment of the ear is satisfied. A sentence which is not fitted to be read aloud is not really good language.

The oral properties of language are commonly divided into *euphony* and *harmony*.

(*a.*) *Euphony.* Euphony, in its relation to style, has regard solely to *the effect of sound upon the ear*, or, more definitely, of the sound of words upon the ear. It applies chiefly, though not altogether, to single words. Euphony,

according to Vinet, is "the combination of agreeable, and the exclusion of disagreeable, sounds in language."

Euphony may be preserved, —

(1.) *By avoiding words and sentences which cause harsh sounds.* These are generally learned and compound words, hard to be pronounced, and mostly of Latin, Greek, and foreign origin. Dr. Chalmers' writings contain many such words. His phrases and sentences are often difficult to be read aloud, and harsh to the ear, because they bring so many consonants closely together; these are all striving for utterance at once; the organs of speech labor to do their part, and this labor destroys the smoothness and pleasantness of the sounds they produce. One should seek, as a general rule of euphony, for *short, radical, easily-spoken words*, although many longer Latin words, and those derived from the Italian and French, are exceedingly euphonious. A familiar example of difficult combinations in a sentence from Scripture is the following: "After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee."

(2.) *By avoiding words and sentences which contain a succession of unaccented syllables;* such words, for example, as "meteorological," "desultoriness."

(3.) *By avoiding long sentences in which new and varied ideas are introduced.* The sound will be disagreeably affected by this; for while the mind is employed in taking in the whole meaning of every part of the sentence, the voice strains and struggles along after it, and thus necessarily grows harsh. One should always give himself time to breathe; the country and the world may be perishing, but the orator, in order to continue to speak with effect, must take breath. Periods, therefore, should not be too far apart. We would not condemn long sentences. If well balanced and well composed, they add greatly to the solidity of a composition; but in relation to euphony of style, of which we now especially speak, if the sentence is long, it should be carefully adapted for speaking, clearly divided and skil

fully arranged, so as not to embarrass articulation in the delivery.

(*b.*) *Harmony.* Harmony goes farther than euphony, and *has regard to sound in its relation to thought.* It is not merely phonetic; it is not merely the production of a sound agreeable to the ear, or the avoidance of a harsh and disagreeable sound; but it has to do with the *rhythmic flow of thought*, and is something more deeply emotional and mental. Original thought usually creates harmony. It does so because it seeks for unity of expression. It arouses that feeling which makes the soul and its powers chord together in one note, and is the true source of harmony. Perhaps we should have said, instead of original thought, a true feeling of the soul, one that is deeper even than thought, or that is the spring of thought: this produces harmony of language. The words of Ruth to Naomi are an harmonious expression of the profoundest feeling: "*And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.*"

Now, what is harmony but a real concord or agreement of parts? And here is a bringing of the soul of Ruth, by a deep purpose of feeling, into agreement with the soul of Naomi; there is true harmony between them. It is noticeable how, through the whole passage, the "thee" and "me" are continually brought into one. It was a perfect surrender of the soul, having nothing left in it of unsubdued, incongruous, or rebellious feeling; and this inward action of the soul uttered itself in harmonious language, like an accord of music. Harmony of soul thus makes harmony of style, as the expression of devotional feeling, which is the chording of the human with the divine soul, and with the soul of all that is divine in the universe. Harmony of

style aids the expression of thought. It flows forth with a rhythmical flow. It is a subtile but deep grace of style, of which the Scriptures are full; as, for example, the hundred and third and hundred and seventh Psalms, our Lord's invitation to the weary, and the last chapter of the book of Revelation, and many other passages of profound and majestic harmony.

Prose, it is true, cannot be sung, like poetry, in numbers, but it may, equally with poetry, have something of this rhythmic character, this harmonious flow. Harmony does not arise so much from single words as from a *succession of words*, or from a sufficient number to express the thought.

We quote upon this subject a few sentences from Cicero: "Nor is there a single quality, out of many, that more distinguishes a true orator from an unskilful and ignorant speaker than that he who is unpractised pours forth all he can, without discrimination, and measures out the periods of his speech, not with art, but by the power of his breath; but the orator clothes his thoughts in such a manner as to comprise them in a flow of numbers, at once confined to measure, yet free from restraint; for, after restricting it to proper modulation and structure, he gives it an ease and freedom by a variety in the flow, so that the words are neither bound by strict laws, as those of verse, nor yet have such a degree of liberty as to wander without control. There is nothing so pliant, nothing so flexible, nothing which will so easily follow whithersoever you incline to lead it, as language; according, therefore, as we ourselves are grave, or subtile, or hold a middle course between both, so the form of our language follows the nature of our thoughts, and is changed and varied to suit every method by which we delight the ear or move the passions of mankind."[1]

These remarks of Cicero show the close study and attention which the ancients gave to this department of oratory;

[1] De Oratore, B. III., s. xliv.

they thought that there was in prose a harmony of numbers almost like that in poetry; that "the musical management of the voice and the harmonious structure of words should be transferred, as far as the strictness of prose would admit, from poetry to oratory."

It must be confessed that the ancients were far more exquisite observers than the moderns of the finer powers and application of art, which is, in fact, but a deeper nature.

This idea of harmony of style should not, however, be suffered to degenerate into an attempt at making music, or musical sentences. This in a sermon would be intolerable.

Yet harmony of style may coexist with strength and energy. Perhaps there is no writer in whose prose style will be found more varied and majestic harmonies, which flow from the thought even more than from the words, than Milton; and certainly there is no stronger, more masculine writer. This, too, may be also said of Lord Bacon's style, and that of Robert Hall.

In regard to preaching, there is often a rhythmical movement in the sermon, springing chiefly from the thought, which is both pleasing and powerful, and carries on the mind of the hearer by a strong, resistless flow. Care in little things, choice of words, arrangement of sentences, smoothing of transitions, attention to accents, lengthening or abbreviating phrases, may, indeed, aid in harmony; but still, true harmony in style comes usually, as we have said, from deeper sources.

2. *Grammatical properties of language.*

This is what De Quincey calls the "mechanology of style." If one great end of education — certainly of classical education — is to speak and write well, to speak and write our own language with purity, we should make ourselves accurately acquainted with the grammar of our own language; for many of the worst faults of style arise from grammatical incorrectness. Quintilian declares that the orator should by no means look down on the elements of

grammar as a small matter, for unless a good foundation in oratory is laid in grammar, the superstructure will surely fall.[1] "Was Cicero," he says, "the less of an orator because he was most attentive to the study of grammar, and because, as appears from his letters, he was a rigid exacter, on all occasions, of correct language?"

In the Life of Prescott, the historian, we read, that when he was a young man, he made, once for all, the English grammar his particular study, and gave his whole time and energy to it; and this may explain, in part, the purity of his English style, which Hallam declared to be perfect. For the preacher, good idiomatic English, as may be seen in so powerful a preacher as John Bunyan, is a greater conquest than the knowledge of Greek or German. We have before, in another connection, said that one should be able to analyze every sentence he writes, word by word. He should be able, more particularly, to tell the character and derivation of every substantive word, of what it is the subject or the object, its opposition with another, or its independence by address, exclamation, pleonasm, ellipsis; to tell the quality and name of each adjective, and whether it is used as belonging to something else, or substantively; to describe every pronoun, and what it refers to and is connected with; to characterize and inflect every verb, and show clearly, if a finite verb, what it agrees with, or, if an infinitive, what it has for its subject, or, if a participial, what it belongs to, and in the whole sentence what its use is, and what it depends upon; to show what every adverb modifies; what every preposition governs and marks the relation of, and what every conjunction and connective coördinates or subordinates; in fact, to parse the whole sentence, whether simple or complex, and to be able to give both its etymology and syntax. This is really no easy task; but how else can a man know for himself if he writes correctly. One should therefore attend to, —

(*a.*) *Grammatical analysis, so far as to be able to detect*

[1] Instit., B. I., c. 4.

common errors in construction. Many of these might profitably be mentioned; but we will not enter into these, which form so portentous an array; we will refer the student to any good English grammar. These grammatical errors relate chiefly to the improper use of verbal cases and tenses; the use or omission of the article; the use or omission of the negative; the employment of useless intensives, to which American writers greatly tend; the mixing of the numbers and cases of pronouns ("the management of pronouns," says Mr. Moon, "is the test of a scholar's mastery over language"); the improper or superfluous use of prepositions; the awkward use of conjunctives; the false use of and the use of false adverbs; the wrong agreement of words in sentences; the improper collocation of words; the making of weak and loose sentences through the too great separation of their connected parts, or what Dr. Campbell calls "a constructive ambiguity;" the use of sentences whose members are imperfect. There may be, it is true, an overprecision of style, which is almost as bad as carelessness; but the present tendency is not in that direction; and what we, as preachers, should aim at, is correct, plain, idiomatic English. One should also attend to, —

(*b.*) *Particular words and phrases which are common violations of grammatical correctness, or, at least, of elegant usage.* It is well for a preacher to keep a list of these, to which he is continually adding; and that will serve him as a reminder, as well as an aid, in his endeavor after grammatical correctness of style.

II. *The related properties of style.* These are something more than language in the abstract, and comprehend *all those relations to the mind and condition, both of the speaker and hearer, which affect style.* They refer to style in the concrete, to the style of the individual who is speaking, and also of his speaking upon a certain subject, for a certain object, and to a certain class of hearers. The speaker's individuality and personality are now infused into the style, and color it.

1. *Those qualities which depend upon the speaker himself*, having relation chiefly to his own thought.

These are *appropriate* thought, *consecutive* thought, and *individuality* of style or thought.

(*a.*) *Appropriate thought.* There should be in every true discourse not only thought, but thought appropriate to the subject and the occasion. One who attempts to write or speak for the public should not write or speak merely for the sake of doing so, without an express aim or purpose.

The beauty of the style of the ancient classic writers is, according to John Stuart Mill, that it is so highly significant; that there are no words or phrases which are meaningless; that there is little writing, apparently, for the mere sake of writing; but all has some genuine meaning, some definite, if not always true, sense. This *realness* of style makes the chief strength and beauty of classical writings. Whately, on the contrary, seems to give something like this advice — that one should learn facility in mere word-making, without (as far as rhetoric is concerned) caring so much for the thought. But such advice should be received with caution, for it indicates, we think, an inadequate conception of the theory of rhetoric. Substantial and appropriate thought is the foundation of every true discourse. Demosthenes never dared to appeal to the feelings of his audience, or to urge them to any policy or action, without first presenting a solid argument for his views. The body of his orations is composed of substantial reasoning; the laying down of principles and facts; appealing to sound sense, and appropriate to the subject and occasion. Such a process has not only a value in developing the subject itself, but it also develops the man; it shows the treasures of his mind and thought. This serves to create confidence in the correctness of his conclusions. And when the conclusion is urged upon the heart and conscience of the audience, they are prepared for it. The force of the speaker's thought has moulded their thought into an image of his own. No facil-

ity of speech, no word-making, can ever supply the place of substantial and appropriate thought. Eloquence, in its widest sense, is, first, subjectively, the native power of thought, and, objectively, the art of using this so that it shall attain a certain worthy and definite end. Appropriate thought is, above all, reasonable thought. A speaker should have some real truth to communicate, and should do it in words that convey some real thought to the mind. This is sometimes called "significance" in style.[1] It is hardly needful to dwell upon the point that in a sermon there should be nothing contrary to good sense. Reasonable thinking is an essential quality of a sermon. This does not admit of anything nonsensical, puerile, frivolous, merely marvellous, or vainly pedantic. It does not admit of spending the precious hour of preaching in trifles or insignificant discussions.

There may be much that is plain and commonplace in a sermon; much that has been said before; much that does not demand a great amount of thought to invent or to assent to; much, even, that is "goodish" rather than good; and yet the reasonable quality of the sermon need not be destroyed or compromised; the bread, if not the finest of the wheat, is still nourishing food to many minds; but this is not saying, that, under any circumstances, what is absolutely unsound or nonsensical can be allowed. All things must come to the test of *common* sense, which is the sense that everywhere prevails, and is established among sound-minded men.

(*b.*) *Consecutive thought.* There should not only be thought, and appropriate thought, but orderly thought — a rational succession of ideas — the avoidance of scattering fragmentary and disconnected thoughts. Whatever has any pretence to a regular discourse demands, at least, that quality; and this is not denying that there may be, at times, bold and apparently unconnected thoughts, left standing by themselves,

[1] Day's Art of Discourse, p. 276.

not nicely fitted into the frame of the discourse, and giving energy and picturesqueness to style, breaking up dull monotony. But there should be, nevertheless, either a natural or a logical progress of ideas — one sentence making addition to another, one paragraph being developed from the thought or statement contained in the preceding paragraph, one division forming an advance to the next.

There should be a movement in the discourse, or it should be thought in motion, increasing in volume like a river, every word, sentence, paragraph, division, preparing for what follows, and all forming a united, living current of thought. Short, broken sentences; long and circuitous parentheses, where the idea, or another than the main idea, is carried off into numberless ramifications; practical thoughts interspersed too freely in pure argumentation; inconsequential and casual remarks, — these break the onward current, which should not for a moment stagnate, and which should move, even if it moves slowly. A spoken discourse is not like a scientific disquisition, which may be a deep pool of contemplation, rather than a fluent stream of thought; but a sermon should introduce thoughts in their natural sequence, and should move on to some definite end. Care should be taken in a sermon to bind it together, not only by consecutiveness of thought, but by every mechanical help afforded by the connections of the language and the structure of sentences. It is not well to employ very short sentences, or a very sententious style;[1] they are more fitted to the neat moral essay than the sacred discourse that lays before us the inexhaustible riches of divine truth.

(*c.*) *Individuality of thought and style.* We have spoken of this in another connection. It is that quality in which the *man* appears in a style that is perfectly natural to him. It is a noble quality. It is refreshing to hear a man's own ideas spoken in his own way. The effect produced is always

[1] Day's Art of Discourse, p. 281.

greater when there is a sense of personal address, springing from the speaker's own mind and feelings, rather than from the thought and impulse of another mind. We do not wish to hear Chalmers from any but Chalmers. We wish to feel that we are taken into the confidence of the speaker, and that we are listening to the actual utterances of his heart. We may be dazzled by the artificial speaker, but he cannot move us as that man can, who, with a higher earnestness of purpose, shows us himself, opens to us his confidence, utters thoughts which he has wrought by the toil of his own mind. One may increase his individuality of style, 1. By aiming at *independent* thought. He may not aim at originality, but he should aim at saying what he truly thinks. We call Thomas Fuller an original writer, but his originality does not consist in his saying things in an odd way, but in his strong, independent thinking. The very subject of the thought is his own, as well as the language in which it is expressed. There is no mistaking the characteristic individuality of his style. A fresh thought of one's own, even if he is not what is called a man of genius, is worth ten of another's, to give him power as a speaker. One may increase his individuality of style, 2. By employing the *more direct personal address* — by not talking to the world, or men in general, but to men before him. It is one man talking to another, and not discoursing about indifferent things. Let there be never so profound a course of thought in a sermon, yet the audience should be made to feel that it is addressed to them — to each of them.

Small things sometimes aid this. Luther liked "thees and thous" in a sermon. The use of the pronoun "you" may give the sermon all the point needed. The individualizing, sometimes, of a member of the audience as "my brother" does this. A sudden grasp laid upon some particular conscience, an allusion to some recent and real event, some common affliction or bereavement, something which brings the thought into the present, — this helps individu-

ality of style. Of course this directness of address should not be overdone, for personalities in the pulpit are outrageous. But one need not be too much afraid of hurting people's feelings by a friendly and manly directness of address; for the habit of applying unpleasant truth to our neighbors, instead of to ourselves, is of familiar occurrence.

A preacher becomes more individual in style who has an individual in view; for this necessarily narrows and shapes his thought, and gives it a personal directness. Even the eye, the finger, the whole manner, should aid in lending life and point to speech. Modern sermons lack point, and hence individuality of style. The essay style scrupulously avoids directness; and in the essay style this is a great beauty. One may increase his individuality of style, 3. By *preaching specific truth*. Generalities may arouse the mind, but particulars search the heart. A single apt fact is more forcible than the most eloquent deduction. Where thus specifically preached, the truth acquires an edge; it becomes indeed like "*any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*"

2. *Those related qualities of style which have more particular reference to their effect upon the hearer or the audience addressed.*

This second department of the relative properties of style, which has reference to its effect upon the mind addressed, and which is objective in its character, has been differently classified by different writers upon rhetoric. Thus Quintilian says that all language has three kinds of excellence — to be *correct, perspicuous, elegant.*[1] Whately sums up these objective qualities of style under the heads of perspicuity, energy, and elegance; Professor H. N. Day considers them to be comprised in the properties of clearness, energy, and beauty; Vinet has a wider classification into the qualities

[1] Instit., B. I., c. v., 1.

of perspicuity, purity, propriety, precision, rapidity, proportion, order, popularity, familiarity, nobleness, gravity, &c. Evidently, some of these last-mentioned kinds mean the same thing in a greater or less degree of development; and all of them, perhaps, might be combined in the two simple qualities of strength and beauty.

We would make a somewhat wider classification than that of Whately, though less extended than that of Vinet; and we would treat especially of the qualities of *Purity*, *Propriety*, *Precision*, *Perspicuity*, *Energy*, *Elegance*.

In regard to those fundamental properties of style, which, by the consent of ages, is fitted to instruct and sway the minds of men, as nothing is good in any of its qualities which is impure, or which in its nature has aught positively false or corrupt, we therefore begin with purity of style.

1. *Purity*. As in morals "first pure," so in matters of the intellect, of taste, and of style, it is first pure, then strong, clear, elegant, or whatever is fit.

Purity of style is that quality which does not violate any of the true principles of language, in respect of form, construction, or meaning.

Purity, and the other qualities of style which we shall mention, belong, it is true, in some sense, to those invariable qualities which relate chiefly to language; but they have also intimate relations to the audience addressed, and the effect upon them. An Athenian audience, we are told, could detect, and would hiss, a wrong accent, a mispronunciation, or a barbarism. A preacher who violates purity of style may, in like manner, in these modern days, lose power with intelligent and educated hearers, and, more or less, with all. The preacher of the pure truth of Christianity should aim at a pure style; and this remark might even be extended to the general truth or purity of the subject-

matter discussed — that the great laws of true thinking, and of truth, should not be violated. But more precisely viewed, purity of style forbids, (*a.*) *The introduction of new words into the language.* Augustus Cæsar declared himself unable to introduce a new word into the Latin language. It is an immense assumption to coin a word; but few can do this. A discoverer may invent a new word for his discovery; a master in any science may coin a word, when the progress of science demands it; writers of established eminence may sometimes modestly propose new words, merely by way of suggestion. New words made by compounding old ones form also a violation of this principle. Our language has not the fatal facility of the German in creating compound words. (*b.*) *Introduction of foreign words.* There is a great danger in introducing German words and idioms into our preaching and theological literature. The careful use of English words and English idioms is one of the first qualities of purity. Americans, as a nation, are peculiarly imitative and assimilative; we take all elements of nationality into our wide civilization; there should be, therefore, while we are an English-speaking nation, a stricter watch kept against the corruption of the language from these foreign sources. The habit of introducing French words and phrases by half-educated people is a weakness that should be resisted. There is a pithy passage which we will quote from the writings of a very old English author of the time of Edward VI. (Sir John Cheke), which is interesting from the fact that this author himself in his day exerted considerable influence in preventing the inroad of foreign words into the language, when the current was strong that way; and it also shows how early a jealousy was awakened for the preservation of the purity of our tongue. He says, "Among other lessons, this should first be learned, that we never affect any strange inkhorn terms, but to speak as is commonly received; neither seeking to be overfine, nor yet living over careless; using our

speech as most men do, and ordering our wits as the fewest have doen. Some seek so far for outlandish English that they forget altogether their mother language. And I dare swear this: if some of their mothers were alive, they were not able to tell what they say; and yet these fine English clerks will say they speak their mother tongue, if a man should charge them with counterfeiting the king's English. Some far journied gentlemen, at their return home, like as they love to go in foreign apparel, so they will ponder their talk with over-sea language. He that cometh lately out of France will talk French-English, and never blush at the matter. Another chops in with English Italianated, and applieth the Italian phrase to our English speaking. The unlearned, or foolish-fantastical that smells but of learning (such fellows as have seen learned men in their day), will so Latin their tongues that the simple cannot but wonder at their talk, and think surely they speak by some revelation. I know them that think rhetoric to stand wholly upon dark words; and he that can catch an inkhorn term by the tail, him they account to be a fine Englishman and a good rhetorician." (*c.*) *Introduction of obsolete words.* The constant use of the Bible by ministers may sometimes lead to the use of archaisms. (*d.*) *Introduction of cant words.* A homely, common word is often effective; but a decidedly cant expression — of religious cant the worst of all — cannot be defended. It attracts only a low class of minds, for impurities of style are allied to impurities of thought; and we prefer to see coarseness anywhere rather than in the minister of Christ. The use of profane words, though employed only as illustrations or quotations, is to be avoided; and there may be too much made even of the excellent idea that the language of the pulpit should be plain and common language; it should certainly be plain, but not too familiar, not low. People go to church expecting something a little higher, in point of carefulness and dignity of expression, than slipshod, every-day speech. Sacred themes demand

elevated language. What little life or power is momentarily secured by the use of low words or phrases soon passes away; while of other things more is lost than gained. (*e.*) *Introduction of solecisms;* e. g., Jonathan Edwards' peculiar philosophical use of the word "necessity" has occasioned vast perplexity in theological science. (*f.*) *Introduction of words or thoughts which violate manly simplicity.* The giving way to loose images, or a too luxuriant fancy, or an overwrought and unnatural intensity of expression, destroys purity of style. This fault may be indicated, rather than fully described.

We should strive for purity of style, because a pure language associates us with our English ancestors, and with Chatham, Milton, Hampden, Spenser, Bacon; Shakspeare, Chaucer, Wycliffe, and, above all, with the English Bible; and it associates us, also, with the great statesmen, poets, writers, and preachers who speak the English language now. It contributes, likewise, to the permanence of a man's usefulness, especially of a minister's, who would speak through his pen. If a man has not a pure style of writing, his thoughts, however excellent, will not float his style; for purity of style is the beginning and indispensable accompaniment of every other literary excellence; it is essential to precision, elegance, vigor. And the care to preserve purity of style is the great safeguard to the constant tendency to debasement in language. In our country, where there is no acknowledged standard of language, where there is great difference of custom, variety of races, and an unrestrained freedom of expression, it should be particularly borne in mind by ministers that they, as educated men, are the guardians of the purity of our tongue, and that there is a moral responsibility connected with their being so.

Purity of style may be preserved, —

(1.) *By care to avoid at all times the use of loose, superfluous, and idle expressions.* Above all, this should be observed in common conversation. Conversation is a fine

art. One should study it. It is a great means of influence to a minister. To be free and spontaneous in conversation, and at the same time to speak pure English, and to retain the best form of expression, is a noble accomplishment. Some ministers wield a greater influence by their conversation than by their preaching; for they are some other persons in preaching, but in conversation they are themselves. While, then, avoiding pedantry and stiff precision, let one strive to use the purest and most select English in all that he says. Let him make sparing use of contractions. Let him not allow a low or slang word to slip out; for the expressions one is accustomed to use in conversation will surely show themselves in the pulpit, especially in extemporaneous discourse. A refined man is shown in his conversation more quickly than in any other way. Burnet, in the History of his own Times, says of Leighton, "In a free and frequent conversation with him for twenty-two years I never heard him utter an idle word, or a word that had not a direct tendency to edification."

(2.) *By close familiarity with a few of the purest English authors.* Let one study the style of *Herbert's* prose, of *Goldsmith*, *De Foe*, *Izaak Walton*, *Thomas Hooker*, *Robert Southey*, *Wordsworth*, *Washington Irving*, and *William Prescott;* and the reverse is also true, viz., a cautious reading (so far as regards their style) of authors of doubtful purity, such as Carlyle and Coleridge's prose.

(3.) *By the study of English lexicography.* Of a good dictionary one might say, "Turn it day and night."

(4.) *By the use of rhetorical criticism*, not only of others, but of one's own. One should never use a doubtful word without examination; let him try himself more unsparingly than any one else. If one would not wish to wear a dirty, ragged, and unbecoming coat in the public street, why should he not take pains to make his words fit his thoughts neatly, and set them off fairly, so that his mind may make its best appearance in public?

(5.) *By the critical study of ancient classic models.* We must go to the Greek for form, as we do to the Latin for dignity of style. Were there room, we would quote on this point the whole of a remarkable letter of Lord Brougham to Zachary Macaulay, giving him advice in regard to the rhetorical training of his son, Thomas Babington, bearing date, "Newcastle, March 10, 1823;" but we must content ourselves with a few of the closing paragraphs: "If he would be a great orator, he must go at once to the fountain head, and be familiar with every one of the great orations of Demosthenes. I take for granted that he knows those of Cicero by heart; they are very beautiful, but not very useful, except, perhaps, the *Pro Milone*, *Pro Ligario*, and one or two more; but the Greek must positively be the model; and merely reading it, as boys do, to know the language, won't do at all; he must enter into the spirit of each speech, thoroughly know the positions of the parties, follow each turn of the argument, and make the absolutely perfect and most chaste and severe composition familiar to his mind. His taste will improve every time he reads and repeats to himself (for he should have the fine passages by heart), and he will learn how much may be done by a skilful use of a few words, and a rigorous rejection of all superfluities. In this view I hold a familiar knowledge of Dante to be next to Demosthenes. It is in vain to say that imitations of these models won't do for our times. First, I do not counsel any imitation, but only an imbibing of the same spirit. Secondly, I know from experience that nothing is half so successful in these times (bad though they be) as what has been formed on the Greek models. I use a very poor instance in giving my own experience; but I do assure you that, both in courts of law and Parliament, and even to mobs, I have never made so much play (to use a very modern phrase) as when I was almost translating from the Greek. I composed the peroration of my speech for the queen, in the Lords, after reading and repeating Demos-

thenes for three or four weeks; and I composed it twenty times over, at least; and it certainly succeeded, in a very extraordinary degree, and far above any merits of its own. This leads me to remark that though speaking, with writing beforehand, is very well until the habit of easy speech is acquired, yet after that he can never write too much; this is quite clear. It is laborious, no doubt, and it is more difficult, beyond comparison, than speaking off-hand; but it is necessary to perfect oratory, and, at any rate, it is necessary to acquire the habit of correct diction. But I go farther, and say, even to the end of a man's life he must prepare, word for word, most of his finer passages. Now, would he be a great orator, or no? In other words, would he have almost absolute power of doing good to mankind, in a free country, or no? So he wills this, he must follow these rules."

2. *Propriety.* This is so nearly related to purity on the one hand, and to precision on the other, that we need not dwell upon it. Propriety is *the employment of words according to the best usage, in a becoming way, and not in some false and unusual manner.* Dean Swift's definition of style is one chiefly of this quality of propriety, viz., "the right words in the right places." Bruyère, quoted by Vinet, says, "Among all the different expressions which may render one and the same thought, only one is good; we do not always fall in with it in speaking or in writing. It nevertheless exists, and every other except that is feeble; and a man of mind, who wishes to be understood, can be satisfied only with that."[1] The just expression is the forcible one; it is the expression that exactly fits the idea, whereas no other expression does exactly suit the idea. An impropriety of style is committed, not only when good English words, or words proper enough in themselves, do not make good sense, because they are employed out of place, or in

[1] Homiletics, p. 378.

some unusual manner; but even when they are used loosely, carelessly, confusedly, and, as has been said, so as to leave some gap between the expression and the thought. Sometimes the strikingly improper use of a single word or phrase destroys much of the force of a good sermon. The best writers are distinguished for their thoughtful yet easy propriety of language, their aptness or fitness of expression. Their thought and language are identical. You feel, in reading or hearing them, that the idea makes just its proper impression; that they do not strike wide of the mark, but hit the centre.

3. *Precision.* Precision in style, as applied to the language of a discourse, is *that quality by which the writer's idea is exactly expressed — no more and no less:* as applied to the subject of a discourse, it is that quality which prevents one from saying anything superfluous, or not saying enough entirely to convey the idea. Propriety is fitness of language; precision is exactness of language. Precision requires that the thought be accurately expressed; that it be completely brought out, but without unnecessary words, without slovenliness of expression. It is an important quality in giving strength and rapid movement to style. It may be violated, —

(*a.*) *By a want of nice perception in the essential differences of words.* As there are a great many words nearly similar, but not the same, the precise writer is shown by his clearly marking those shades of difference; as in the terms "atonement" and "redemption," "regeneration" and "conversion," "mercy" and "grace," "charity" and "benevolence," "soul" and "spirit," "immortality" and "eternal life."

(*b.*) *By a deficiency of words.* We may use too few as well as too many words for precision; and this is an especial source of obscurity in writers who use a condensed style. We must sometimes repeat words, to be accurate. The omission of words needed to complete a sentence is a common

fault, the writers thinking that *their* meaning is sufficiently clear; as, "His was the tongue to speak, his the arm." "Precision" means "cutting around," or "cutting before" —"making accurate limits;" and while it tends to conciseness, it is still not precisely conciseness, which is rather "cutting short," or "cutting off." "Conciseness," says Vinet, "is distinguished by an economy of words greater than the object of precision requires; for precision only suppresses what is decidedly superfluous, and would spare the mind a fatigue, that which springs from the necessity which an author puts upon us of condensing the thought, or reducing it to a few elements. Conciseness, stopping short of what is necessary to complete expression, is not designed, doubtless, to fatigue the mind, but it gives it labor, and thus it enters into the category of those procedures or figures of which we have before spoken. It is an ellipsis, not of words, but of thoughts. Taking it as a figure, or, at least, as a particular force of style, it can hardly constitute the form of an entire composition, especially that of a sermon. It is too apt to produce obscurity; it approaches to affectation and the epigrammatic style. It is often but the false semblance of precision, and nothing is easier than to have at the same time much conciseness and very little precision; for it is possible to be at the same time parsimonious and prodigal, and, with all this affectation of strictness, to leave only vague ideas in the mind of the reader or hearer."[1]

(*c.*) *By a verbal diffuseness.* Precision is also sometimes lost in too great expansion, as well as condensation, of style. Where too many words are used, when the texture of the style wants fibre, when it is loose and diffuse, the language is no longer an instrument of expressing accurate thought. Writers who have an easy command of words, a native facility of expression, are greatly tempted to accumulate words about the thought, so as to hide or overload

[1] Homiletics, p. 382.

it. Even so brilliant a writer as De Quincey errs in this way. Such a style is especially faulty in a sermon. What may be called a learned diffuseness, entering wearisomely into the exposition of what may be, after all, secondary matters, — is particularly out of place in a discourse that is to operate directly on the conscience and the will. Precision of style is especially opposed to needless repetitions, pleonasms, and expressions that add nothing to the thought. There may be, at times, a certain rhetorical redundancy which is the genuine expression of eloquent feeling, a heaping up of epithets in the warmth of onward discourse, which looks like careless profusion; but there should not be prolixity. An idea should not lose itself in a vague sea of words. There cannot be much expansion in earnest oratory; it must sweep on to the end. Perhaps there is no one thing in which young writers, and we may say preachers, so often fail as in condensation.

(*d.*) *By disregarding the distinction between the literal and the figurative use of words.* The accurate use of religious and theological terms which are founded upon figures of speech, and of the metaphorical etymology of important words, such as "righteousness," "depravity," "virtue," "holiness," &c., would be desirable; and generally the figurative language of Scripture should be used with accuracy. This language has a meaning, and often a more intense meaning than literal language can express; and it may be so profoundly true that common language breaks down with the weight of the thought or the truth to be conveyed, and it seeks the figurative form, the wings of the imagination, to bear it up. Nevertheless, figurative language, even if it occurs in Scripture, should not be used as if it were the language of prosaic literalness, or cold, logical statement.

(*e.*) *By want of precision of thought.* This is, doubtless, the chief source of want of precision of style. Vague expression often gets the credit of profound thought; but

more often it is vague because the thinking is not accurate nor profound. There is a great temptation for a writer or speaker to express a half idea before he has thought it through, or detached it cleanly from all other ideas. Loose thinking and loose writing go together.

Let us now look at some of the *benefits* of precision of style. It conduces to the vigor of our mental habits; it promotes cleanness and clearness of thought; every idea is thoughtfully separated from every other idea; nothing extraneous is left clinging to it; the style acquires almost the force and condensation of proverbs. We see this sometimes in Coleridge, notwithstanding his marked faults of style in other respects. "Men should be weighed, not counted." "The most deceitful are the most suspectful." Such precise, weighty phrases now and then occur between his long and obscure sentences, like lumps of shining gold.

There is nothing that the popular mind so delights in as in this quality of precision, for it sees in the speaker a power which it does not itself possess. Precision, too, marks the difference between a true and a spurious style. A true style has genuine ideas, and expresses them so that they cannot be misunderstood; whereas a mock style has no true ideas, and makes up the deficiency in vague and grandiloquent phrases. In religious discourse this is particularly hurtful. Better have the simplest and most common thoughts, clearly expressed, than what Carlyle calls "phosphorescent punk and nothingness." Precision is peculiarly the style of science, but it need not for that reason be a learned, nor, above all, a pedantic, style.

The means of acquiring precision of style are, briefly, (1.) *Think precisely.* Bishop Butler, in the preface to his Sermons, says, "Confusion and perplexity are, in writing, indeed without excuse, because any one may, if he pleases, know whether he understands or sees through what he is about; and it is unpardonable in a man to lay his thoughts before others when he is conscious that he himself does not

know whereabouts he is, or how the matter before him stands. It is coming abroad in disorder, which he ought to be dissatisfied to find himself in at home." Before writing, one should know exactly what he intends to say. (2.) *Think on abstruse subjects.* Now and then the metal of the mind should be tried on the most difficult themes; and one should not always choose easy themes, or treat any theme easily. (3.) *Make use of precise language in ordinary conversation and writing.* We may experience a sense of great poverty of language at first; but language is a special study, and the constant use of a good book of synonymes may aid us. (4.) *Study the style of Bishop Hall, Lord Jeffrey, Archbishop Whately*, and, in many respects, *Robert South*, who used language accurately, and made close discriminations, except when in a passion.

Precision of style should not degenerate into stiffness or pedantry, and thus spoil the ease and flow of nature. Harms, quoted by Tholuck, says, "Let the preacher speak negligently and incorrectly." It is better to do even that than to lose all life and freedom in an over-fastidious attention to precise correctness of language; so that, perhaps, what Cicero calls "a diligent negligence" — one which unites correctness with freedom — will best describe the true style.

4. *Perspicuity.* This is "something which can be looked through" like glass; it is *that quality which enables the hearer to comprehend at once, to see through, the idea intended to be conveyed.* Its opposite is obscureness. It is considered by Vinet to be the first quality of style — an opinion founded on the words of Quintilian, "*Nobis prima sit virtus perspicuitas.*" Perspicuity may be violated, —

(1.) *In relation to the idea itself.* It may not be a true, a rational idea, although at first sight seeming to be one; or it may be a true idea obscurely expressed; or it may be a truly profound idea, difficult to be expressed and compre-

hended, from its real depth. It has been pronounced the greatest effort of genius to make abstract ideas plain. The preacher should not strive to be so plain as to become insipid; and there is often obscurity in the truth itself, for mystery is a source of power. A stream may be very clear and very shallow. Thus it is that the preacher of the infinite truths of the gospel cannot always make himself understood by every one in his congregation, though that certainly should be his aim. He should study his congregation in that respect, and should strive to put himself in the place of his hearer. His style should be "just high enough to raise his audience, and just low enough to reach them."

(2.) *In relation to the language in which the idea is conveyed.* This refers especially to the distinction between figurative and literal language, the neglect of which, as has been suggested in another relation, is one of the most fruitful sources of obscurity. True imagery, discreetly employed, may be made the means of clearness of style, for the imagination is an illumining power, and the ability to use appropriate imagery in the pulpit is often the ability to flash light into the obscurest depths of a theme. It is the imagination playing in upon the argument, or the imagination coming with her torch to help the reason in the search for truth; but the imagination may, through a confusion of images, destroy perspicuity. It breaks, as it were, the mirror at which we look, into many fragments, giving back only confusing reflections.

The means of attaining perspicuity of style are, —

(*a.*) *A careful attention to the use of single words.* 1. *Connectives.* The words which form the mechanical structure of a sentence should be short, plain words. The proper use of adverbs and pronouns, in relation to the words they agree with, is to be carefully attended to; for little words contribute more to perspicuity than the larger; they are, as it were, the pins and joints which bind

a sentence together, or on which it turns and moves. Here care should be bestowed. 2. *Words with a plurality of meanings.* These should be used only in such connections as to exclude all but the meaning intended.[1] Such words as "assumption," "broad," "sense," "turn," "well," "flat," "ravel," "mean," "particular," "scale," and hundreds of others that might be mentioned, which have two or more senses, should be so used as to avoid ambiguous meanings. In like manner the same word should not be used at a short interval of separation in different senses. And, as coming under the same general principle, words should be used in their most common and best-understood senses. Here the principle of propriety or fitness in the use of language aids perspicuity.

(*b.*) *Attention to the relations of qualifying phrases to each other.* When carelessly collocated, or too widely separated, the most absurd meanings are oftentimes produced.

(*c.*) *The avoiding, as much as possible, of the extremes of ellipsis and parenthesis.* All involved sentences, though not all long sentences, are to be avoided, if we would seek perspicuity.

(*d.*) *Care not to change the construction of the sentence too abruptly*, so as to lose sight of the subject or the object. This is a frequent cause of ambiguity. Especially in making comparisons and antitheses, one should avoid the use of dissimilar constructions in setting forth agreements and differences.[2] A well-balanced comparison conduces to perspicuity of style.

(*e.*) *Attention to the harmonious construction of sentences.* (See remarks of Bulwer Lytton, in his Caxtonia, Essay VIII., on "Rhythm in Prose, as conducive to Precision and Clearness.")

(*f.*) *The avoiding of too learned and scientific phraseology.* Were every sermon a *concio ad clerum*, this might

[1] Bain's Rhetoric. [2] Idem.

be a merit of style, because it would be addressed to an audience that could understand it; it would be to them perspicuous; but the preacher who talks too much of "moral necessity," "cognitive faculties," "volition," "objective" and "subjective," and the like, does not preach like Him who, even in his parables, wherein he purposely hid the truth from the unspiritual, used simple language. We should indeed be thought lunatics, should we preach like the opening sentence of Dr. Thomas Browne's Essay on Christian Morals: "Tread softly and circumspectly in this funambulatory track and narrow path of goodness; pursue virtue virtuously; leaven not good actions, nor render virtues disputable. Stain not fair acts with foul intentions; maim not uprightness by halting concomitances, nor circumstantially deprave substantial goodness."

The writings of *Hume*, *Dr. Emmons*, and *Archbishop Whately* are good models of perspicuity; and of a certain beautiful lucidness of style, of what the French call *clarté*, which the imagination makes by bodying forth its ideas in forms that shine in noonday light, Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress is an eminent illustration.

5. *Energy.* This is sometimes called "strength," sometimes "force," sometimes "effect," sometimes "nerve," and sometimes "vividness" of style; but the old Aristotelian word Ἐνέργεια expresses it best. It is, without doubt, the most important quality of style, without which all the others are of little account. If the preacher of God's salvation shows no energy in his speech, he had better hold the plough or stand behind the counter all his life.

Energy is that quality which gives a sense of power in the speaker and in the truth which he speaks, and thus forces attention to the subject in hand, and stamps it upon the mind of the hearer. The great source of energy of style is *energy of feeling* and *energy of thought.* Strong thought makes a strong style. Energy is, above all, a subjective quality.

It is the product of a vigorous and well-trained mind. And the state of the mind at the time of writing is an important consideration — the interest felt in the subject, the vivid conception of the theme, and the strength of purpose and of aim. As we have said, strong thought will make a strong style. A trumpet blast cannot come out of a reed, even though, as Pascal says, it is "a reed that thinks." There must be the energy of soul before energy of expression. Yet, although there must be this original force of mind for great energy of style, there are certain legitimate rhetorical helps to the production of that great and noble quality.

The means of attaining energy of style may be divided into two: 1. *The fit use of words.* 2. *The figurative use of words.*

1. *The fit use of words.* Generally speaking, this is an observance of all the other properties of language and style which have been mentioned, fusing them together by the heat and power of a strong purpose; but, more definitively, it consists of three particulars — the *kind*, *number*, and *arrangement* of words in sentences.

(1.) *Kind or choice of words.*

(*a.*) *The use of short Saxon words.* The energy of Carlyle's style arises chiefly from his use of rugged Saxon words, some of them so old as to be new. Macaulay also often exemplifies this: "You must dig deep if you would build high." Herbert Spencer, in his Essay on Style, has some interesting remarks on the use of Saxon words, as economizing strength and time, thus adding force, or, as his expression is, "economizing the recipient's attention." In fact, the great source of power in style, according to Spencer, is *economy of words.* (Essays, pp. 12–15.)

(*b.*) *The use of specific instead of generic words.* The latter may be often necessary, but the former give vividness. Dr. Campbell says, "The more general the terms are, the picture is fainter; the more special they are, the

brighter." "Rome fell" is more forcible than "The Roman empire came to an end." "The beauty that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome," might be generalized and weakened. The use of specific instead of abstract words saves the hearer the delay of thinking what the abstract term signifies, and thus conduces to rapidity and energy of impression. As a general maxim of style, therefore, concrete words are better than abstract.

(*c.*) *The use of words whose sound corresponds to their sense*, thus giving a more vivid force, and helping the hearer to catch the thought through the sense as well as through the reason.

(*d.*) *The use of common and natural, instead of technical, words.* The theological style contains stereotyped words and phrases which diminish energy and promote dulness, because they sound too familiar to some persons and too abstruse to others. Religious ideas, ideas clothed in fresh, simple, and natural words, seem like new truth, and have great power and attraction for the popular mind. Any suggestion of the artificial indicates weakness. Thus too much antithesis tends to produce a cold style. You hear the first statement, which is put into an antithetic form, and you wait in a critical state of mind to hear the corresponding sentence. It is a purely intellectual process. Macaulay's style may dazzle the mind, but it does not often touch the heart; for men are jealous of the appearance of art.

(2.) *The number of words.*

It is a general principle that brevity gives strength. "*Si gravis, brevis.*" The utmost conciseness consistent with clearness promotes energy. Too many connectives, expletives, and qualificatives weaken style; those are better fitted for a descriptive than an oratorical style. "The orator," says Quintilian, "cannot use goldsmith's scales."[1]

[1] See a suggestive passage in Sir E. Bulwer Lytton's Caxtonia, p. 94, on the proper style for the orator, in contradistinction from that of the writer or essayist. The remarks will apply with increased force to the pulpit orator.

To have, or to seem to have, a fine command of language — "a flow of words" — is the temptation of young writers; but after a thought is once sufficiently expressed, everything added weakens the sentence, though there may be a little more of diffuseness allowed in oral than in written language. Conciseness is violated by all tautological and circumlocutory phrases. Sentences should be recast, until those enfeebling redundancies disappear. And the same may be said in regard to thoughts. "In the choice of competent ideas, or in the choice of expressions, the aim must be to convey the greatest amount of thoughts with the smallest quantity of words."[1]

(3.) *The arrangement of words.*

This is an important point in respect of energy of style. The Greek and Latin languages, through the variety of their inflections, are remarkable for the energy attained by the simple arrangement of words in sentences. That is often a key to their significance.

The forcible arrangement of a sentence is promoted, —

(*a.*) *By a regard to the preservation of its unity.* However manifold the form of the parts, there should be no doubt, from the clear arrangement of the sentence, what is the main idea, what is the unifying thought. That is not to be broken up; for "nothing broken," it has been well said, "can be projected with the force of a whole body."

(*b.*) *By the periodic structure of the sentence.* A periodic structure is one in which the important thought or word of the sentence is reserved for its close. It is opposed to a loose construction, in which the sentence ends in a straggling way, or with one or more dependent clauses. Whately's definition of a periodic sentence is, "A period is a complex sentence in which the meaning remains suspended till the whole is finished." The idea is, that the sentence should end with a blow which clinches the whole, and binds it forcibly together. That is conducive, also, to the clear

[1] Herbert Spencer's Essays, p. 35.

and forcible delivery of a sentence, leaving nothing fragmentary, nothing to be gathered up by the voice; it is, in homely phrase, pulling up with little or no decrease of momentum. Sometimes a sentence may be made to have a periodic structure by simply reversing the order of its clauses. As a general rule, the weakest words and clauses should come in the middle, the strongest at the beginning, but, above all, at the close. The general statement should precede the particular, the less striking that which is more so, the less concentrated and intense that which is more so. On this subject of the arrangement of words in a sentence, and of thoughts in style, see Herbert Spencer's Essay, p. 16.

(*c.*) *By the use of a direct mode of expression.* In a direct style, the adjective comes before the substantive, the predicate before the subject, the qualificative before the qualified part of the sentence. Oratory should go straight to the point. It demands the avoidance of a form of sentence where the mind is held long in suspense. It is better to break up the thought into short sentences, and to approach the meaning by a series of approximations. Where there is, however, in one sentence, a great number of preliminaries to be attended to before the main subject or idea is arrived at, or when the sentence is quite complex, one should judiciously mingle the two, bringing in the main idea before the close of the sentence, but yet after the mention of several preliminaries. This is mingling the direct and indirect styles. In oratory, one should not fatigue attention, or strain the mind of the hearer to too great an effort to catch the meaning of the speaker. The thought and the expression should be as near together and as direct as possible; for oratory does not allow tediously circuitous phrases, but is bold, direct, impetuous, massive, brief.

(*d.*) *By a judicious use of antithesis.* Tacitus among the ancients, and Macaulay among modern writers, are mas-

ters of antithesis. The antithetical arrangement of a sentence gives a more vivid view of the subjects contrasted. It shows different sides, and they reflect light on one another. The relaxed attention in regard to one side of the antithesis gives the mind renewed power to view and appreciate the other side.[1] There may be an affected antithesis, which, with all its brilliancy, soon palls, as in most of the modern French writers. In fact, variety in writing, alternations of light and shade, new combinations of words, contrasted ideas, the picturesque and bold breaking up of sentences, and all means of averting dulness and monotony, increase the force of style. Surprise is an element of strength as well as beauty.

(*e.*) *By the use of the climax.* Sentences should not decrease in strength, although sometimes a long paragraph may have a softening or a letting down toward the close; but in a categorical succession, the strongest word and the strongest thought should come last. Yet sometimes a primitive force is added to an old word that has lost its original value, by using it climactically; as in a sentence of Daniel Webster's address on Washington: "He was a great, a good, a *respectable* man." Nature itself dictates the climax; the storm gradually rises to its full strength. *Cicero* among the ancients, *Robert Hall* among the moderns, make a fine use of the climax. By too frequent and uniform a use of the climax, however, the style loses power; and it is only at considerable intervals that the fullest effect of the climax can be realized.

2. *By the imaginative or uncommon use of words.* We have discussed the fit use of words; we will now glance at the imaginative use of words, for the promotion of strength of style. The use of figurative language, we have seen, may often increase perspicuity; its judicious use may even in a greater degree promote energy of style, by taking

[1] Vinet's Homiletics, p. 390.

words and thoughts out of their common, plain, and logical forms, and holding them up in the living aspects which the imagination imparts to them. The imagination is awaked by feeling. Its presence, therefore, when natural and free, implies a certain living energy; it fills words with a new sense. Imaginative energy of language, rhetorically considered, may express itself, —

(1.) *In the trope.* A trope is when there is some unmistakable resemblance between the thing and what it signifies; as "sword" for "war." There is no mistaking the essential identity of the two. *Resemblance* is, indeed, the general principle which runs through and governs all figurative language. The trope is the simplest kind of figure. Many single words, thus used tropically at first, have lost their figurative sense, and thereby their first energy; but such tropical words as "firmament," "imagination," "melancholy," "express," "detect," "bridle" (as a verb), "fine-spun," "rivet" (as a verb), "insult" (to leap on a fallen foe), were very forcible at first. Words may be also used figuratively in a less direct and simple sense, as in synecdoche and metonymy, by which often great effectiveness is produced. They help to give a rapid, picturesque, distinct impression, bringing in the eye, the sense, to aid the understanding, and thus economizing time.

(2.) *In the metaphor.* A metaphor is where there is a resemblance or similarity in some *relation* rather than property, which presents to the mind something analogous between the object signified and that which is expressed; as in the common phrase, "a mountain wave." Whately prefers, as a general rule, the use of the metaphor to that of the "simile" in oratory, because it has greater brevity, and moreover, it permits the hearer to make out the resemblance for himself, which is pleasing, and, at the same time, it aid rapidity. His words are, "All men are more gratified at catching the resemblance for themselves than in having it pointed out to them." If this is true, the metaphor should

not be too dark or obscure, and it should be something naturally and immediately suggested.

(3.) *In the simile, allegory, personification, &c.* The *simile*, unlike the metaphor, makes the object represented the principal thing for the time being; it makes it stand out in its full proportions; it draws the resemblance out into all its minute details of analogy or identity. It is a more elaborate figure than the metaphor, and it is needed when the comparison is one that necessarily has many parts, and cannot, therefore, be immediately suggested to the mind. As to the order in which the language of metaphor and simile should be introduced for the highest effect, these figures should generally precede the thing illustrated by them.[1] The figure should come before the introduction of the idea which is set forth by it. By its light first kindled, the object is thus brought out more vividly, which is the almost invariable order in the Scriptures, in the figurative language of Proverbs, the elaborate types and illustrations of the prophecies, and, above all, in the parables of our Lord. "*As the cold of snow in the time of harvest, so is a faithful messenger to them that send him; for he refresheth the soul of his master.*" How much this would lose, if the order were reversed, to read, "A faithful messenger refresheth the soul of his master, as the cold of snow in the time of harvest"! In the order of the last sentence, the attention becomes partly interested in the thought itself of the refreshment of a faithful messenger to the soul; but it is a duller attention or interest than if the thought should come after the striking simile or metaphor that has just awakened an interest in it.

But we cannot dwell upon these familiar rhetorical distinctions, or upon the novel uses which imagination makes of language; suffice it that the imagination throws new life into language; it brings distant objects face to face; it searches out hidden resemblances; it makes the past and

[1] Herbert Spencer's Essays, p. 32.

the future stand before the mind as a present reality. Dr. Chalmers' imagination was shown not so much in the use of figures as in this general vivification of his style. In his illustrations he made use of the simile rather than the metaphor, and his illustrations were generally drawn from nature, or the natural sciences. There is a noble and extended simile given in Hanna's Life of Chalmers, vol. iii., p. 299. The simile, also, at the close of the sermon, "On the expulsive Power of a new Affection," is very beautiful.

The entire absence of all figurative energy of style is a marked defect. The imagination clothes the dry bones of thought with flesh and blood. It is one great source of invention, and of that *freshness* which is so great a beauty, and which generally makes the difference between the dry and the interesting speaker. "The Protestant pulpit has too much neglected imagery in style; it has been iconoclastic in this, as in everything. It has not attempted a flowery style, the most contemptible of all; it has tried to set forth thought, which is not superfluous for any, but is, above all, useful to the least instructed. But images of speech fasten the idea in the memory by a golden nail. These must not be confounded with the loose and fallacious *analogies* of certain preachers who make a reason of a comparison."[1] The imagination should supply an inward refining, purifying, organizing, spiritualizing light and heat, rather than be suffered to break out into too many startling figures of speech. The style of Demosthenes had little of the figurative, but much of this idealizing power of the imagination. Above all, in speaking, the figurative use of language should not degenerate into the poetical style of writing. Robert Hall said, "I am tormented with the desire of preaching better than I can. I like to see a pretty child or pretty flower, but in a sermon prettiness is out of place. To my ear it would be anything but commendation, should it be

[1] Histoire de la Prédication parmi les Réformés, p. 121.

said to me, 'You have given a pretty sermon.' If I were upon trial for my life, and my advocate should amuse the jury with his tropes and figures, burying his argument beneath a profusion of the flowers of rhetoric, I would say to him, 'Tut, man, you care more for your vanity than for my hanging. Put yourself in my place; speak in view of the gallows, and you will tell your story plainly and earnestly.' I have no objection to a lady's winding a sword with ribbons and studding it with roses when she presents it to her lover; but in the day of battle he will tear away the ornaments, and use the naked edge to the enemy."

If one does use figures, let them be, 1. *One's own*, and fresh. 2. *Not far-fetched.* 3. *Common, but not trite or vulgar.* 4. *Strong, chaste, manly, natural, not fine and elaborate;* they should not be drawn from anything artificial, like dress or upholstery.[1] 5. *Suited to the nature of the subject.* 6. *One figure to one subject*, and not the mixture of two or more figures in the same sentence, or very near together.

Nature and the natural sciences afford the richest field for illustrations. It would be indeed desirable to have more of the fresh influences of nature in our arid sermons, more of the breath of blossoming clover fields, more of the rustling of autumn corn, more of cheery, blessed sunshine, of singing of birds, even of the dash of the stormy sea, lifting up its hoarse anthem. This would be, we believe, true praise to Christ, by and through whom all these glorious things were made, and who, when he walked the earth, communed with God in nature as well as in spirit. As a general rule, young writers and preachers need not be urged to the use of figurative language, but rather, perhaps, restrained from it; yet it is better to be in exuberance in a young writer than to be absent altogether; for it may be trained into an element of strength.

[1] Quintilian's Instit., B. VIII., c. 3, s. 5.

A word might be said upon *pathos*, which is a true though mild form of energy of style, and which is partly the product of the imagination, and partly of the feelings, and without which a sermon is often powerless. Modern preaching — highly intellectual and brilliant — too often lacks tenderness; and perhaps it is true that "a high civilization supersedes the more primitive emotions." Pathos springs from tender feeling, or from a suggestion that awakes tender feeling. It is produced by bringing up objects that excite our compassion, pity, love — that touch the springs of feeling.

The theory of a modern essayist is an interesting one — that some touch of the past which imagination brings up is always needed for pathos; some comparison between former happiness and present pain. The office of pathos is certainly to overpower the degrading sense of petty personal cares and of present momentary annoyances, with the blending of thoughts of greater power and depth. Something of the *irrevocable* — of loss which cannot be restored — enters into all pathos, and sets the sorrows and vexations of the hour at their right level; and even a slight severance, if it be forever, — when it is said of a little rivulet,

> "No more by thee my steps shall be,
> Forever and forever," —

that is enough for pathos. The smallest act performed for the last time awakes the pathetic sense.[1] Pathos, whether treating of the past or the present, is a sudden and timely utterance, which gives vent to the feelings, and a relief to sad thoughts; and tears, if they spring from an inner fountain, sometimes refresh and do good to a hardened heart. This power can be cultivated in the preacher only by keeping his own heart open, his sympathies warm and free; by not suffering the emotional part of his nature to be frozen up by the keen, cold breath of the intellect, or by the hard

[1] Essays on Social Subjects, from Saturday Review.

realities of life. Scotch preachers, rugged as their style often is, are pathetic preachers, because their hearts are warm. Pathos always speaks in simple language — the language of nature and of children; a natural metaphor, a homely illustration, a story related in the plainest way, is enough often to touch the deep spring of feeling in the heart. The greatest natures have generally the most power of pathos. Luther's illustration of faith by the little bird singing on the spray, under the great arch of heaven, without care, because his heavenly Father feedeth him, is but a reproduction of the affecting beauty of our Saviour's own words. The pathetic may not be often drawn upon, certainly not in one sermon, or there is thus a waste of feeling, and a greater difficulty in its reproduction; and it hardly need be added, the attempt at pathos, where it is not genuine, is ever a failure, and deserves to be.

In concluding these comments upon energy of style, we would say, that after the best rules have been given, there is something deeper still in the man himself; and energy is no factitious acquirement, but is the result of the action of all the powers of the nature set in motion by what Dr. Brown would call that τὸ θερμόν — that "fiery particle" — that original energy of soul which is beyond and beneath all. Pericles, chiefly from this quality, was called "the Olympian." His general style is described by critics as harsh and abrupt, "seeming like one who dealt thunderbolts from the clouds." Thucydides says of him, "He controlled the multitude with an independent spirit, and was not led by them so much as himself led them; for he did not say anything to humor them, but was able, by the strength of his character, to contradict them, even at the risk of their displeasure. Whenever, for instance, he perceived them unreasonable, or insolently confident, by his language he would dash them down to alarm; and, on the other hand, when they were unreasonably alarmed, he would raise them again to confidence." Thus his force was in himself, rather than in what he said.

His celebrated "funeral oration" is, however, from the nature of the theme, more free from this abruptness than his other addresses to the people, and has more of order and unity. Energy in a speaker comes from a strong will, acting on a strong intellect, when both of them are moved by a strong emotion. "No man can be a great preacher without great feeling."[1] All comes at last to this: —

"Gefühl ist alles."[2]

It is said of John Wesley, a man of iron self-control; of calm, even cold, temperament; that sometimes, in preaching, his heart was mightily stirred, and then the myriads before him felt a power that bowed them. He says of himself, on one occasion, "In the midst of a mob I called for a chair; the sounds were hushed, and all was calm and still; my heart was filled with love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed, they were ashamed, they were melted down, they devoured every word."[3]

But how is this profound spiritual emotion excited? We answer, by some real belief, some strong and all-absorbing realization of the object under discussion, and which makes it a living truth to the mind. Therefore, for one to be an energetic preacher, he must be a man of strong faith — of faith which fills him and moves him more than any present object of mind or sense. Confidence in the truth awakens energy, passion, imagination, all the great forces of the soul. The love of Christ, the intense realization of the truth of this love, of the actual work of redemption which Christ wrought by his sufferings and death for the world, and the need which every man has of this salvation of the cross, gave Paul his energy. That constrained him to speak and to act. Zeal for the righteousness of God, and wrath against those who pervert the truth, inspired Luther with energy.

[1] Alexander on Preaching, p. 32. [2] Faust.
[3] Stevens, History of Methodism, v. ii., p. 383.

"Luther used to assign a very characteristic and unique cause for the effectiveness of his sermons and writing. I have no better work, he said, than anger (*zorn*) and zeal; for if I wish to compose, or write, or pray, or preach well, I must be angry (*zornig*). Then all the blood in my veins is stirred, my understanding is sharpened, and all dismal thoughts and temptations are dissipated. No doubt a noble moral *indignation* this, against all meanness and evil. But even what we usually call *temper* often gives great energy. Swift's rage was malignant; Luther's, noble. Something personal — even literary egotism, as in Gibbon, or some individuality, as in Hawthorne — promotes energy of style."[1]

Baxter said he preached as "a dying man to dying men;" but there was probably no sign of dying or failing strength in such preaching. It was full of life and power. He was possessed by the truth, and that made him powerful.

What a preacher South would have been if he had had the spirituality and Christ-like earnestness of Baxter! Saurin was a preacher of great energy of style. He abounds in interrogations, in passionate address, in bold and fiery passages that seem to flame out of his heart. Dr. Beecher's style was a noble example of energy; this is illustrated in his famous temperance sermons.

After all that has been said, let it not be supposed that any mere rhetorical art can produce real energy of style — above all, in the preacher. To hold the truth, as the truth holds us, in entire and all-absorbing mastery — this alone will make us strong preachers. Earnestness is the soul of eloquence. He who feels makes others feel. The man who so loves freedom that he is willing to give his life for it, is the man to speak for the cause of freedom with power. He casts rhetoricians behind his back. The preacher who is filled with the sense of the eternal truths which he preaches, so that they are as real to him as his life, and infinitely more

[1] London Spectator, October 26.

important — he is the man to reason of righteousness and judgment to come. He who, though not seeing, yet believes in the unseen Christ, who loves him more than any other object — he is the one to speak of the love of Christ, so that the rocky heart shall melt. *Faith*, then, is the chief source of energy in the Christian preacher. He who speaks because he believes, will not deal in weak arguments or flowers of rhetoric. He has something more earnest than that. The great want of modern preaching is not want of knowledge, but want of *fire*.[1]

John Bunyan said, "It pleased me nothing to see people drink in opinions, if they seemed ignorant of Jesus Christ and the worth of their own salvation."[2] That feeling fired his preaching, and gave it its intense individualizing and awakening power.

6. *Elegance. Elegance of style is that quality by which thought is expressed in a way that appeals to good taste.* We have spoken of it incidentally under the head of the principle of Taste in Preaching. It seeks to realize the ideal of beauty, and its chief elements are propriety, right sentiment, and grace.

It does not altogether lie in the language, but in the thought; for it is the expression of a refined mind. Elegance is not inconsistent with energy of style, since the beauty of the works of nature often adds to, instead of taking from, their powers. It is a common remark that there is almost as much beauty as grandeur in Niagara. True elegance is dispensing with all that weakens style, with all false ornament, and everything contrary to good taste. Demosthenes' style was at once elegant and strong.

The sources of elegance of style, and means of its attainment, are, —

(1.) *Fineness of perception.* This, of course, is, for the

[1] Alexander on Preaching. [2] Philip's Life, p. 257.

most part, a native gift, but may be greatly developed and improved by culture. Such a delicate perception unconsciously avoids all thoughts and expressions that offend good taste. The highest degree of elegance comes from the severest mental culture.

(2.) *A careful avoiding of false ornament.* It is an altogether false idea that elegance consists in ornament; it may sometimes consist in avoiding it. It is, more truly speaking, ornament of the right kind and in the right place — the assemblage or union of things that harmonize. A Corinthian capital looks misplaced on a Doric column. "Whatever is improper cannot embellish."[1] Ornament which is inexpressive and overloaded, which does not help, but encumbers, the thought, takes from elegance; for no ornament is good which is not in some way useful. The ornamental drapery of nature, even to the smallest leaf, serves some genuine purpose. We meet in nature with no senseless or useless things. Everything contributes to some vital object. So, in style, ornament is not an end, but a means: it imparts force to this truth; it brings that subject more into the light; it softens the severity of that line of argumentation; it clothes the nakedness of that bare fact. It is itself intended to suggest thought and to aid thought, not merely to attract and amuse, and by no means to take the place of more solid qualities of style. The elaborate work and ornament on a cannon may be admitted to relieve the stern character of the instrument; but in war, the best ornament is to have the piece well polished and in good condition to send the ball. In any ornament we may employ, let us ask ourselves, Does this increase the effect of my sermon? Does it aid the thought? If not, reject it. There is no such curse to a writer as the desire of *fine writing*. It clings to one worse than the robe of Nessus, and it must be given up at any sacrifice. And, lastly, in relation to ornament, let it always be remembered that there must

[1] Quintilian's Institutes, B. VIII., c. iii.

be strength in order to sustain ornament; there must be the brazen column to bear the carved work and adornment upon it.

(3.) *A careful choice of fit words.*

(4.) *Precise thinking.* Precision is a great help to elegance of style, which delights in sharply-cut and clearly-defined lines. There may be a certain sublimity in vague thought, but elegance requires clear and distinct thought.

(5.) *Methodical arrangement.* Of this faculty of method a modern writer thus speaks: "The more we examine the higher orders of intellect, whether devoted to science, to art, or even to action, the more clearly we shall observe the presence of a faculty common to all such orders of intellect, because essential to completion in each — a faculty which seems so far intuitive or innate (*ingenium*), that, though study and practice perfect it, they do not suffice to bestow the faculty of grouping into order and symmetrical form ideas in themselves scattered and dissimilar. This is the faculty of method; and though every one who possesses it is not necessarily a great man, yet every great man must possess it in a very superior degree, whether he be a poet, a philosopher, a statesman, a general; for every great man exhibits the talent of organization or construction, whether it be manifested in a poem, a philosophical system, a policy, or a strategy. And without method there is no organization or construction. But in art, method is less perceptible than in science, and, in familiar language, usually receives some other name. Nevertheless, we include the meaning when we speak of the composition of a picture, the arrangement of an oration, the plan of a poem. Art employs method for the symmetrical formation of beauty, as science employs it for logical exposition of truth; but the mechanical process is, in the last, ever kept visibly distinct, while in the first it escapes from sight amid the shows of color and the curves of grace."[1]

[1] Caxtonia, p. 306.

(6.) *Harmonious arrangement.* The sentences should be such as flow easily from the tongue — such as are euphonious. The ear must aid the style.

(7.) *The study of beauty in nature and art.*

There is a caution to be observed in striving after elegance of style. Vinet remarks, in his Homiletics (p. 470), "The preacher, in order to be elegant, must have recourse to practice; and another and much greater effort will be necessary not to appear so. Elegance which announces itself, elegance which shows itself, is unskilful and unhappy; but chaste elegance is appropriate to the pulpit." Whately also has an admirable remark on this point (Rhetoric, Style, chap. iii., part iii.): "The safest rule is, never, during the act of composition, to study elegance, or think about it at all. Let an author study the best models, mark their beauties of style, and dwell upon them, that he may insensibly catch the habit of expressing himself with elegance; and when he has completed any composition, he may revise it, and cautiously alter any passage that is awkward and harsh, as well as those that are feeble and obscure; but let him never, *while writing*, think of any beauties of style, but content himself with such as may occur spontaneously. He should carefully study *perspicuity* as he goes along; he may also, though more cautiously, aim in like manner at energy; but if he is endeavoring after elegance, he will hardly fail to betray the endeavor; and in proportion as he does this, he will be so far from giving pleasure to good judges that he will offend more than by the rudest simplicity."

In these classifications of style which have been under discussion, we have spoken of each at the time as valuable; but they are features of one style, variations of one chord; for all the good qualities of style should appear in a man's speaking — all varieties of the thoughtful, the euphonious, the pure, the precise, the perspicuous, the energetic, the

elegant, the plain, the direct, the profound — even as his needs and his feelings are. It is just this noble variety, this mastery of all the chords, which shows the true orator. The orator should indeed know all things; but the preacher should have a wisdom from above.

THE PASTORAL OFFICE.

PART FIRST.

THE PASTORAL OFFICE IN ITSELF CONSIDERED.

§ 26. *The Pastoral Office founded in Nature.*

Pastoral Theology, technically speaking, is a branch of Practical Theology, and it includes all that the other branches do not teach, or all that remains to be taught in the education of the Christian minister. In other words, it strictly includes only *those methods of pastoral labor and instruction which are employed outside of the study and of the pulpit.* It has reference to all extra-pulpit ways and means, all practical efforts and agencies, of extending the Christian faith, and of benefitting the souls of men.

We shall, however, take a more comprehensive view than that of pastoral theology, and shall follow in part Vinet's plan, although differing from it in many important particulars; indeed, while we would not have the presumption to attempt to make up Vinet's deficiencies, yet we would endeavor to adapt him, in many practical respects, to the wants and requirements of our American ministry; for, in a country like ours, where the Christian faith has its freest and fullest development, and the separation of church and state is a real, not theoretical, reform, the Christian ministry has already taken on among us a fairer and larger type than it has ever yet assumed, or can assume, amid the repressive influences of the Old World civilization.

Our method will be, from the discussion of the pastoral office itself, and its foundations in nature and Scripture, or the absolute view of the subject, to pass on to the actual embodiment of the office in the fit personal instrument; and from that, to discuss the pastor's general relations to society and the world around him; and from that, to come to his more special, profound, and enduring work in the care of souls, in the realm of spirit, and in the extension of Christ's eternal kingdom.

In treating of the *natural* foundations of the pastoral office, we would lay down the principle,—

1. That it is an axiom of true philosophy that "God makes his first and fundamental revelation in the constitution of our own minds;" that there is an innate faculty of thought and a moral consciousness in man, to which God appeals, by awakening in him the feeling of religious obligation and the desire of religious knowledge; for to know truth, and the highest truth,—that of God,—is the deepest want of the mind. There is, therefore, we reason, *an à priori element in man's mind, which makes religious sentiments and religious institutions fit and natural to him.* No institution, we may safely affirm, which has continued for centuries, and which is of a universal character, and which, above all, is an institution divinely intended to continue to the end of time, can be without a foundation in nature; there must be some universal natural want which it supplies, or some essential truth which it stands for; there must be the subjective groundwork in the human heart, and in human nature, of the outward fact in society.

2. We would, then, affirm that *there is this root, or basis, in nature itself, of the pastoral office;* and we would endeavor to prove this chiefly by four arguments:—

(1.) *As every universal want of humanity, where there is a capacity to supply this want, creates an office, in like manner the most universal want of man—that of religion*

— *creates the office of religious instructor;* or perhaps, more strictly, we should say, is the inevitable occasion for the creation of this office. Thus the necessity of public order and safety, and of the limitation of individual liberty for the common good, originates the office of civil government. Some kind of government, more or less elaborate, exists in all communities, even the most degraded; while in nations of more advanced civilization, certain men are devoted to the function of framing and administering the laws; and the more exclusively they are devoted to this office, the better rulers they are. In the judicial department of government, especially, we are apt to think men cannot be too rigorously occupied with their high calling. The more important the government, and the vaster the interests at stake, the more entirely should rulers be absorbed in the duties of their office. As another illustration of this general principle, the natural demand for knowledge, and the capacity of the human mind to investigate and enjoy scientific truth, necessitate the existence of a class of public educators. The office of educator is a universal one. In the semi-civilized East, one may see Arab children sitting in a circle, under the shadow of some old Egyptian temple, undergoing instruction from a native pedagogue who does not know that the world goes round the sun; but here is the exclusive and universal office of educator, as truly as if the man had been an instructor in natural science in any European university. These analogies might be multiplied. The world thus presents the spectacle of certain recognized and fixed offices among men, which have sprung from the general wants of humanity and the constitution of the mind; and with how much greater force does this principle apply to the office of the Christian ministry, which is not to supply a changing but a fixed necessity, not a temporal but an eternal want! The underlying idea of religion, which is our need of God, and union with God, exists, even if obscured, in all minds, enlightened and heathen, and is more wide-

spread and profound than any other. Sin only deepens it; superstition and idolatry only bring it out in a more intense prominence; and thus we find in this natural religious instinct the universal demand for the existence of a class of men who, by the gravity of their lives, and their intelligence, are supposed to be capable of holding more intimate communion with God, of giving expression to divine truth, and of instructing the people in religion. But this is not mere hypothesis, as we shall see in arguments that follow.

(2.) *As no true society, or community, can exist without* 1. *officers*, 2. *rules*, 3. *members, so the religious element cannot develop itself into an organized form in society without creating its regular officers as well as members.* As the political element in society naturally crystallizes into a regularly constituted state, with its officers, laws, and citizenship, so the religious principle in society must do the same by the working of the same principle. This is Whately's argument, and may be found carried out fully in his Kingdom of Christ, Essay II. Whenever, therefore, the religious element works at all (and there is no portion of humanity in which it does not do so, truly or falsely), it must take on some kind of organized life; and this organized life, in order to exist and operate, must have its regular officers, or ministers, as well as its rules and members.

(3.) *Wherever man is, or has been found, something essentially corresponding to the office of the Christian pastor, or permanent religious teacher, has, in fact, been also found to exist.* We find the priestly office existing in the childhood of the race, and in the earliest nations — not to instance it among the Hebrew people, because the Hebrew priestly office might be considered as having been positively instituted — but among nations of a corresponding antiquity, the Chaldean, Egyptian, Persian, and Greek. These ancient priests and prophets were teachers of divine things, if false teachers; and we have reason to think that the more enlightened Egyptian priesthood really possessed some faint con-

ceptions of higher truth concerning the unity of God's nature, which constituted their mysteries. The sacerdotal class of heathen antiquity also presided over the sacrificial rites; and here we find another root in nature for the ministerial office, since the idea of sacrifice is a natural and universal idea of humanity, springing from the perturbation and want which sin occasions. This same profound idea of sacrifice is what the Christian ministry, in purer spiritual symbols, and in its true significance, chiefly waits upon and sets forth. Even the Druidic priest of our own English ancestors, dealing in human sacrifices, may have had distorted glimpses of the spirituality of God; for no idols are found at Stonehenge, or generally throughout the land of the old Celtic *cultus*. At the present day, all existing nations have also their regular religious officers and teachers. Even in Central Africa, the blood-besmeared "fetich-priest," described by Dr. Livingstone, corresponds (as a putrefying body does with a living one) to the true religious leader and instructor; and, as a general rule, even these cunning and bloody men are supposed to be the dupes of their deceitful arts, and to believe in their own ferocious religions. But we need not confine the argument to heathens and savages, for all men, even the most highly civilized and educated, will have, and do have, their religious instructors, whether true or false; for the need is in man to seek for an expression of the great thoughts of the soul and of divine truths. It is, therefore, true that in the most cultivated sceptical circles a few minds guide and rule the rest, as "living oracles," from which there is no dissent. They are the chosen ministers of spiritual things, called to this perilous position by preëminent intellectual gifts, and they have large and devoted flocks of immortal souls.

(4.) *There is something in the nature and gifts of certain men, instinctively recognized by the people, which constitutes them pastors* — ποιμένας λαῶν. Hero-worship, though often indiscriminating and blasphemously exaggerated, and degen-

erating, in fact, into a kind of devil-worship of force, has a germ of truth in it; for it is the method of God, fight against it as we may, that some minds are made to be leaders, and the history of the world is, in a great measure, the popular development and assimilation of the thoughts of such minds, that are acted upon by higher influences; for such minds are more susceptible to such impulses; they form centres or depositories of that supernatural energy which is imparted and carried out in great popular movements, reformations, and changes. In the religious world Nature herself may, in some sense, be said to consecrate certain men for the office of spiritual rulers and guides — such as Luther, Wycliffe, John Robinson, John Wesley, and, in a still higher sense, Moses, Samuel, Ezra, Elias, John the Baptist, and the apostle Paul. Such men needed no crook to show that they were shepherds of the people; the people recognized them, and willingly followed them, and could not help doing so. Nature points out the true pastor of the people by certain indisputable signs: first of all, by the spirit of self-sacrifice, the willingness to lay down his life for the sheep; also by the power of sympathy, which few men manifest in any large degree; and yet again, by a kingly love of truth and moral earnestness. Such qualities, bespeaking a natural fitness for the pastoral office, show that some men are marked by nature and chosen by God to be the religious instructors of their fellow-men; and "one man," says Chrysostom, "inspired with holy zeal, sufficeth to amend an entire people."[1]

There may be, it is true, *objections* raised to the view which we have endeavored to establish: —

1. *The levelling tendencies of the age, or of coming ages, will do away with the ministerial office.* Thus Vinet says that Herder thought that the ministerial office would at

[1] Neander's Life of Chrysostom, Eng. ed., p. 119.

some time be done away; but it was from a very different reason.[1] Herder's idea was, that in the growing and greater general light of the advancing kingdom of truth, the office of truth-bearer, or light-giver, would be gradually absorbed and lost; but that this cannot be so, and also that the levelling tendencies of the age cannot do away with the ministry, may be inferred from three reasons: (*a.*) *As man is born ignorant*, with no innate knowledge of God, though with an intellectual and moral constitution exquisitely fitted to receive this truth, he must continue to have instruction in divine truth. (*b.*) *As man is a sinful being*, and will continue to be so, he must continue to have guides to holiness. (*c.*) And to advance a step beyond nature, and take in, also, an idea of revealed truth, or of the gospel, so long as the present economy of nature and grace remains unchanged, and man continues to be a being *who needs to be saved by the redemption of Christ*, no man, to the end of time, can be brought back to God and saved without the instrumentality, directly or indirectly, of divine truth upon his heart.

2. *Among the truly enlightened and good there is no longer any need of the minister*, who is needed only for the ignorant, dark-minded, and wicked; but every good man's own heart is his temple, and his own conscience his minister. The objector here altogether loses sight of the great fact that man is a social being, and bound up with a race in the same natural and spiritual economy; that his perfection, or his highest perfection, is in union with the perfection of common humanity, and that no man can individually possess the perfect truth; he needs the aid and wisdom of his fellow-man to whom may be granted more light in spiritual things. That is the natural way appointed for man to come to the truth, and to widen his own sphere of truth, through the help and sympathy of his fellow-man — the truth thus glan-

[1] Pastoral Theology, p. 41.

cing from mind to mind, or being concentrated, like magnetic centres, in some chosen minds. In short, no man can secede from the race, or from the church; he must be willing to sit down at a common table, and feed upon a common bread of life. "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all,*" is a truth of nature as well as of revelation. We therefore hold that the office of the religious minister will never give way to the encroachments or changes of time; and that men may level the hills, but they cannot build railroads to heaven; that the pastoral office is as much a natural institution in the moral and spiritual world as a mountain which supplies the plains with moisture and streams is in the physical world; that human nature responds to the divine command, "*Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work unto which I have called them;*" that as all men have recognized the divine office in the past, they will continue to do so in the future; and it is well, in these times of growing irreverence for positive institutions, and of the increased importance which is given to natural institutions and intuitions, that pastors should show to their people the *natural* foundations of the pastoral office, and make them see that if they have not the true religious teacher — the "ministry of the word" of God — they will inevitably have the false religious teacher — the ministry of the word of man. But we have higher and surer ground even than this to stand upon.

§ 27. *Divine Institution of Pastoral Office.*

Whatever is necessitated or established by nature is, in a true sense, a divine institution; but God has also put a special stamp of positive divine institution upon the office of the Christian pastor.

Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world to found a kingdom of truth; and after his brief ministerial life and

testifying death he was to develop and extend in the minds of men the truth he came to establish. He planted the germ, by his own human life and death, which was to be nourished through his spiritual presence in the world, after he had left it in the body. The special means, he taught us, by which his spirit was to operate, was through the free and affectionate agency of human instrumentalities instructed by his spirit in all truth. In this way the church was to be saved from idolatry, from the superstitious worship of the human person of Christ, and from the worship of any one impersonated form of truth, rather than the spiritual worship of God; for the truth was to be taught in many ways, and through the medium of various independent minds, that, taken together, represent the common wants and characteristics of the race. The Lord chose, to be the immediate depositaries of the truth, certain men out of the multitudes who were attracted by his teachings — men of strong spiritual susceptibilities, though of humble origin, and of the greatest contrasts of natural gifts and dispositions — a little representative world.[1] The Lord kept these ever near him; he ate, walked, and lived with them; he moulded them into the image of his will; he prepared them for their work by impressing upon them his own spirit, by training them to his methods of teaching truth, by making them, in a word, Christ-like; for the apostles were *the first Christian ministers*, taught by Christ himself. In some respects, therefore, they are the models for all Christian ministers, while in other respects they stand alone and unapproachable. The apostles, according to the Saviour's command,

[1] Mosheim thinks that the twelve apostles had reference to the twelve tribes of Israel; that the name itself is Jewish, and was applied to the officials or legates of the high priest, who were despatched on missions of importance, they thus signifying that Christ claimed to be the true high priest of the nation and of men. The number twelve, as composing a jury, and its use in other relations, would seem to lend a kind of after force to the idea that the apostles were intended to represent the popular mind, the "world," in a religious point of view.

continued in Jerusalem for quite a long period — Lechler says for twenty-five years, though other commentators narrow this time down to twelve years. The apostles, at all events, remained in Jerusalem long enough completely to organize the Christian church, and to establish it in all its simple but divine ways, ordinances, and doctrines, preaching and performing the duties of pastors, as would appear from Acts 2: 42. The church in Jerusalem very soon grew to the number of five thousand, and doubtless continued to increase rapidly; though, suffering persecution, it was impossible that it should continue to remain one congregation. It was, undoubtedly, soon broken up into different congregations, or parishes, which had teachers and presbyters of the apostles' appointment; but the whole body was still presided over by the apostles. This primitive idea of different church organizations, with different pastors, but forming one church, founded upon the apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, as it was seen in this primitive Jerusalem apostolic church, is a beautiful conception of the Christian church, which was then fully realized, and which carried out the truth that will finally be recognized and reëstablished, that "*there is one body and one Spirit.*" Let us, then, examine this name or function of "*apostle*," as being the first historic instance of the divine office of the Christian ministry which was positively founded by Christ himself; and let us see wherein it differs from and agrees with the present office of Christian pastor. Vinet says it is "the soul that gives the name;" and this name of "apostle," as well as other names of the ministerial office, originally expressed some distinct idea, and sprang from some real necessity.

Ἀπόστολος. This is derived from ἀποστέλλω, "to send off" or "send forth." In classic Greek, ἀπόστολος is applied to "a commander of a fleet ready to sail;" its prime idea is that of a messenger fully prepared, fitted, charged, to go

on some definite commission, such as the legate or ambassador of a government. This idea of definite "commission" is shown in Gal. 2 : 8.

The historic application or significance of this term in Scripture doubtless has reference to the act of the Saviour when he sent forth the twelve (Mark 16 : 15) with the charge, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*" The apostles were specially fitted and commissioned by Christ to bear his message, and testify of him to the world. They could do this, because they had seen, known, and been instructed by him. They were his personal and credible witnesses (Luke 24 : 46–48) : "*And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem; and ye are witnesses of these things.*" They were not only eye-witnesses, but heart-witnesses, by having known and loved Christ, so that they could say (1 John 1 : 2, 3), "*For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also might have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.*"

They proclaimed Christ from love, from the deep apprehension of their whole being, as Christ said to them, a short time before his death (John 15 : 15, 16), "*Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*" As Christ's friends, they had been brought into fellowship with Christ,

and had looked not only on his face, but on his soul; one of them, at least, had not only leaned upon his breast, but had imbibed his spirit. Christ's spiritual personality was formed within them; in John's Gospel, especially, we have the divine life as it is only manifested to the soul in communion with the Redeemer; and John's "Christology"—profound, vitalizing, containing the hidden germ of "eternal life"—remains still the deepest revelation of God to any human mind.[1] They were thus superior to all gainsaying on the subject of Christ and his truth, for they knew whereof they affirmed, and testified that they had seen.

The words just quoted above from John 15 were not spoken to Judas, neither was the commission to go forth and preach the gospel spoken to him. His character should be studied by every minister; for he may also have had some native susceptibility to love what was lovable, and he may have loved Christ at first sight with impulsive affection; but the world was strong in him, and the power of Christ's love was not able to draw him into this higher spiritual fellowship with the Saviour; he was at heart worldly; the root of supreme selfishness was not cut up in him, and he followed Christ not for his Lord's sake, but for his own. The example of Judas, one of the twelve first Christian ministers, is a peculiar admonition to ministers that the service of Christ, and daily contact with the highest truth, are not enough in themselves to secure fidelity to the Master.

But let us look at the more specific application of the term "apostle." Without entering into the controversies respecting James and Jude, and other mooted points, the name ἀπόστολος is strictly applied but to the *twelve* apostles, or, more specifically, to the *eleven*, sent forth by Christ to testify of him whom they had personally seen and known. These are what Paul calls (2 Cor. 11 : 5) οἱ ὑπερλίαν ἀπόστολοι;

[1] Hagenbach's Hist. of Doctrines, v. i., § 18.

and in Acts 1 : 26, οἱ ἕνδεκα ἀπόστολοι. In this sense, of course, there were no successors of the apostles; but we find the name ἀπόστολος applied also to *Paul* by himself; and we believe he used it in its original application. He calls himself (1 Cor. 1 : 1) κλητὸς ἀπόστολος — one specially called, or commissioned, by Christ; and in Eph. 1 : 1, ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ διὰ θελήματος Θεοῦ — one to whom Christ had specially revealed himself (at his conversion, at least), and had indicated his will to him as truly and literally as to the original apostles — 1 Cor. 15 : 8: "*And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*" He had a claim, which he strenuously maintained, to be called an original apostle, though it is a puerile supposition that Paul was chosen by Christ to fill Judas's place, instead of Matthias, who was chosen simply by the apostles. As to Matthias, he was chosen after special prayer to Christ, and, without doubt, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; he also, of course, had seen the Lord. But the term "apostle" is applied, in *two other instances*, to others than the eleven. In Acts 14 : 4 and 14, Barnabas and Paul are called "apostles;" but here, it is probable, the greater contains the less. As Barnabas was appointed the helper of Paul, he naturally shines in his light; and Barnabas himself, moreover, had seen the Lord, so that even in the original sense he had a certain right to be called an "apostle;" and both were solemnly set apart by the elders of the church of Antioch, under the special command of the Holy Ghost (Acts 13 : 2).

The remaining instance is in Romans 16 : 7, where Andronicus and Junia are called apostles, or, at least, this passage may be so interpreted. If so, the word is either used in a secondary sense, as "messengers" or "servants" of Christ; or these persons had really acquired the right to the name from the fact that they too had seen the Lord; for it is said of them, οἳ καὶ πρὸ ἐμοῦ γεγόνασιν ἐν Χριστῷ. That, undoubtedly, has reference to those of whom Paul speaks in 1 Cor. 15 : 6: "*And he was seen of above five hundred*

at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep." The term "apostle," therefore, we think, is never, in its primary sense, specifically applied to any but those who had seen Christ, or who could thus personally testify of him and of his resurrection. This simple fact would seem to be decisive in regard to the theory of *the apostolical succession*, which is disposed of so conclusively by Whately, in his Kingdom of Christ (Essay II., p. 182); and surely, when we have the positive statements of such learned churchmen as Archbishop Whately, and of Bishop Stillingfleet, who declared that "this succession is as muddy as the Tiber itself," and of Bishop Hoadly, who says, "It hath not pleased God, in his providence, to keep up any proof of the least probability, or moral possibility, of a regular, uninterrupted succession; but there is a great appearance, and, humanly speaking, a certainty, to the contrary, that the succession hath often been interrupted," — we need not enter into further reasoning upon that point. "Irregularities through such a long stretch of time could not have been prevented without a miracle; and, as a matter of fact, there are many such recorded."[1]

The fallacy of the theory is in making the succession *individual*, instead of *general*. The fact of a body of Christian ministers' continuously existing from the time of the apostles to the present day, or of the church's always having and recognizing its own ministers, who, in an important sense, derive their succession from the apostles by possessing their spirit and teaching the truth they taught, — this is an undeniable and valuable fact; but that any *one* minister of this series, let him be called "bishop," or simple "pastor," has had an unbroken descent, by successive ordinations, from the apostles, — this is too great an assertion; it cannot possibly be sustained. And this is all — this assumption — that there is in the claim of the apostolical succession.

While, therefore, we cannot hold to any such sacramental

[1] Whately.

virtue imparted by the laying on of human hands, we still believe in a general and moral, though not individual, and, as it were, physical, succession of Christ's ministers from the apostles. We believe that every true minister's commission to preach is drawn from Christ himself, not from his apostles.

The intrinsic apostolic office, therefore, was an extraordinary one, and *ceased with the apostles;* which we believe is true from these simple reasons: 1. Because the "apostle" was one who had personally seen Christ and his works, and thus could bear direct testimony of him. 2. Because he had received a direct personal commission from Christ. 3. Because he had received supernatural gifts, viz., the gift of inspiration and the gift of working miracles. 4. Because the apostles were overseers and planters of the *universal* church, they exercised a general care and oversight of the churches; in a word, "the government of the churches was vested in the apostles, not individually, but collectively."[1] 5. Because, historically, although there were extraordinary appointments ordered by the Holy Ghost, as the appointment of Paul and Barnabas, we hear of no new apostle's being regularly chosen after the death of James the elder (Acts 12: 1).

But though the name and office of "apostle" were thus extraordinary and incommunicable, yet the apostles formed the type of the Christian ministry, as we may see from three or four reasons: 1. The work of the Christian ministry now is essentially the same as that of the apostles; viz., to testify of "the truth as it is in Jesus" to all men. 2. Its call is essentially the same, for every true minister receives a real, if not manifestly personal, call from Christ himself, and is a minister *διὰ θελήματος Θεοῦ*. 3. The instructions the apostles received from Christ apply in spirit, if not in letter, to ministers now. The "sermon on the mount" has been

[1] Coleman's Primitive Church, p. 150.

called Christ's "ordination sermon," although Neander thinks it was not actually addressed exclusively to the apostles yet it was doubtless primarily addressed to them. The discourse of our Lord in Matthew 10, respecting the disciples in their relations to the world, and his conversations in John, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th chapters, are precious testaments to ministers of the gospel. 4. The lives of the apostles were meant to be "ensamples" of Christian ministers' lives; and the best human model of the Christian minister is the apostle Paul. The differences in the ages being so great, the apostles, of course, in many things — in their dress, mode of living, and even outward forms of speech and preaching — cannot now be followed entirely; but as it is contrary to the spirit of Christianity to erect exclusive orders, or to take men out of the pale of human sympathy and imitation, therefore we believe that apostles are our pastoral models in all respects, excepting where they were plainly endowed with supernatural gifts. The apostles individually assumed no special authority, but they exemplified the humility of their faith by addressing other Christians as "brethren," and by recognizing the full rights of individual Christians, and of the churches in ecclesiastical matters.

Christ left the apostles to ordain and regulate the ministry, even as he left them to plant and organize the church; and we judge from this that questions about the form and order of the ministry are really secondary questions; there was to be a ministry to preach the truth and to serve the church, but historical events were permitted to shape and mould the outward form of this ministry.

There is a comprehensive passage in Ephesians 4: 11, where the divine foundation of the church is treated of, and the different New Testament appellations of the Christian ministry are given, each of which has a foundation in some truth or duty connected with the original institution of the ministry, and this may introduce us to a brief discussion

of other ministerial titles; and gathering these all up, and pressing out their juices, we may see the full richness of the pastoral office, as instituted by Christ. This passage from Ephesians will be our text: "*And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.*"

Προφήτης. This title, occurring next after *ἀπόστολος*, is thus invariably assigned to the second place. It was also an extraordinary title in that which was peculiar to it. It arose from a necessity of the times. In the Gentile churches newly created from the heathen world, as Christian teachers were rare, new converts seem to have been inspired by an immediate inspiration of God to teach divine truth, and in some cases, as that spoken of in Acts 11: 28, to foretell events; although Olshausen, on 1 Cor. 14: 1, asserts that "the work of the 'prophet' in the apostolic church was the *awakening* power necessary for the extension of the infant church, and therefore was held in high respect." It is probable that the Old Testament "prophet" was more peculiarly a revealer of future things, and the New Testament "prophet" was one inspired to an extraordinary insight of spiritual things already revealed. It was an opening of truth to the mind, a flash of light from above, impelling one to speak, as in 1 Cor. 14: 29–31.

As this gift of prophecy was a great and enviable gift, so it would be coveted by many; and false prophets arose even in the apostles' day. But there were certain signs or evidences, indicated by the apostles, to detect false prophets. This peculiar *χάρισμα προφητείας* did not probably survive what might properly be called the apostolic age, though it might have lingered somewhat longer; for when the churches became established, young men were regularly set apart and instructed for the ministry.

Yet even as there are points of resemblance between the

apostolic office and that of the minister now, and, as the schoolmen said, "the whole is contained in every part, and v. v.;" so, in some sense, the office of "prophet," as belonging to the ministry as a whole, remains in the church, and has its partial gift represented now; for the "prophets" were preachers of Christ. They were extraordinarily endowed to teach divine truth in times of ignorance and darkness; and, in like manner, there have been, in the whole history of the church, peculiar, if not supernatural, illuminations of individual minds, to teach divine truth, to manifest the way of life in times of unusual deadness and gloom. Prophetic minds, rising up in lapsed epochs of the church, have not only brought great native powers to bear upon truth, but in those shaping influences which have gone forth from them, and in new unfoldings of truth, there seem to have been special illuminations of the Holy Spirit granted them, as teachers of the word. They have been centres of spiritual awakening; and often men of simple lives in the church, with no pretension to learning, have a power imparted to them almost like that of the old "prophet," and this in the very mode of exhortation of the primitive church, for the original "prophets" were probably uneducated men.

John Bunyan is an example of such a modern "prophet" in the church. His work was peculiarly an *awakening* work; he said that his preaching "began with sinners," and was chiefly addressed to the impenitent conscience, to doing that arousing work of which he had himself so deep an experience as a sinner. His "Jerusalem Sermon" is, from beginning to end, a trumpet-blast exhortation to the sleeping conscience. These words of Bunyan have always seemed to have in them something of the spirit of the inspired times of the primitive Christian church: "I will not now speak all that I *know* in this matter, yet my experience hath more interest in that text of Scripture, Gal. 1: 11, 12, than many amongst men are aware: '*I certify unto you, my brethren, that the gospel which is preached of me is not after man.*

For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.'" [1]

Every true minister has these periods of special power and light in speaking the word; but this parallelism should not be pressed too far.

In this connection, and under this head of "prophet," we might mention other offices of the Christian ministry, or, more properly, *χαρίσματα* (for none of these were permanent offices), which were also of an extraordinary character.

Some of them are enumerated in 1 Cor. 12: 28, "*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps in government, diversities of tongues.*"

Leaving, then, the text from Ephesians for a moment, we will take up this passage, and will look first at the name *Δυνάμεις* — lit. "powers," trans. "after that miracles" — the abstract for the concrete. The same office, or gift, is referred to in the tenth verse — *ἄλλῳ δὲ ἐνεργήματα δυνάμεων* — "to another, working of miracles." It seems as if God, in his resolve that his "word" should take root and prevail, imparted to common men, not to apostles only, miraculous powers; and this is no more unreasonable or impossible than that Christ himself should confirm his words by signs following, i. e., miracles. He extended his miraculous powers to his church, for that church must and should prevail. The Roman church claims the continuance of supernatural and even miraculous gifts in the ministry. We should like to discuss this interesting point, did it not lead too far astray; we would merely refer to Neander's Life of Christ, pp. 128, 129, as stating the character of a true miracle in so philosophical a manner as to go far, in itself, toward the clearing up of this question.[2] The early testimony of Chrysostom is valuable. At the beginning of his XXIXth

[1] Philip's Life of Bunyan.

[2] See, also, Olshausen, Comm. Matt. 1: 8.

Homily upon First of Corinthians he says, the miraculous gifts are "no more." The simple reason he gives for this is, that the circumstances of the times were changed. When men were converted out of rank heathenism, in order that they might know the truth, and teach it to others, and confirm it by their works, they were straightway endowed with supernatural powers; and they had to be possessed of these powers to contend with the pretended miraculous powers of the heathen soothsayers. So long as Christianity had to encounter the reign of devils on earth, Chrysostom says, its miraculous gifts were continued. Olshausen's opinion is, that miraculous gifts lasted, although gradually diminishing, until the foundation of the church had been completed[1] — perhaps until the end of the third century, when Christianity broke down the power of heathendom. The first planting and propagation of the word required miraculous power; it was, as it were, a complete revolutionizing of nature; but, when once planted, the truth is able to win its own way, and to make men free.

Χαρίσματα ἰαμάτων — "gifts of healing," — and *γένη γλωσσῶν* — "diversities of tongues." These belong to the same class of supernatural powers, which may have extended to raising the dead. Chrysostom thinks that the "gift of tongues" was the most useful and largely bestowed of the miraculous gifts, and, at the same time, it became the greatest cause of divisions.[2] Whether we look upon it as an ability to speak new and unacquired languages, or to speak in an unknown tongue, as by an immediate revelation, it seemed to be a distinguished gift, and one highly coveted. The Romish church claim the gift in the first sense as still residing in their church, and they assert that St. Francis Xavier possessed it; but, if we mistake not, he did not claim it for himself. Yet, in some modified sense,

[1] Commentary on Matt. 8 : 1.

[2] Homily XXIX.

we might say, especially in relation to the missionary operations of the church, that both of these gifts are even now needful.

This subject of miraculous ministerial gifts brings before us, 1. The wonderful spiritual resurrection at the period of the introduction of Christianity, when powers of light strove against powers of darkness, and holy oracles and tongues contended against unholy oracles; when the whole spiritual world, good and evil, was moved to its profoundest depths, and revealed itself by a direct projection of its powers upon the outward world. 2. The gross darkness into which the world had sunk at the coming of Christ, when it reached its lowest point of ungodliness. Evil had come to its utmost power in the world, and Christ appeared in the fulness of time; there was an utter need of the manifestation of God. 3. The worth which God puts upon the truth of Christ; that it must be pushed forward into the world, even if it overrides the laws of nature. This should make ministers feel the worth of the gospel they preach, and the interest God has in its triumph.

We have found, in the passage from Corinthians on which we have been commenting, and also in the tenth verse of the same chapter, that, in order of rank or place, "*miraculous gifts*" are mentioned after the simple office of "*teacher*," with the single exception of the extraordinary office of "apostle," which combined both. In fact, in both of these passages from Ephesians and Corinthians, there are set before us the "gifts" rather than the "offices" of the ministry. The office of "teacher" or "pastor" — neither the highest nor the lowest in the series — would seem, from other sources of proof, to be the one which remains as the regular office of the ministry. Of the nine "*charismata*," this one alone is left, and absorbs the rest; the more awful and supernatural light of "apostle" and "prophet" has faded; the more dazzling flash of "miracles" has ceased; and there has been left the plain, simple, ordinary, but no

less divinely instituted, office of the Christian "pastor," shining, like the light of day, serenely in the church.

Before, however, taking up the title of "pastor," and other more ordinary titles, we would say a single word more upon the remaining title mentioned in the passage from Corinthians.

Ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις — lit. "helps," "governors." This, probably, was also an extraordinary office, or gift, and refers to men of special influence, social standing, and weight of character, who were taken into temporary power to aid the apostles and early pastors in ruling the church during its formative, unsettled period. These "helps in government" were not, probably, the same as those referred to in other places as "having the government over the church"—such as "elders," "bishops," &c.; but they were temporary rulers and leading men, throwing their controlling weight of authority and influence into the early struggles of the church, against the anarchy, evil, and disorderly influences around and within. They were like the *seniores plebis* in the African church of the fourth and fifth centuries, who "were not clergymen, but civil personages, and other prominent members of the congregation."[1]

We now return to the original passage in Ephesians. In the place next after "prophets," we have "evangelists."

Εὐαγγελιστής. This title is found three times in the Scriptures—in Acts 21 : 8, where Philip the deacon is also called an "evangelist;" in 2 Tim. 4 : 5, when Timothy is exhorted "to do the work of an evangelist;" and in the passage we are now commenting upon—Eph. 4 : 11. This title evidently refers to those sent forth by the apostles, and endowed with their authority, to publish the "evangel," or "glad tidings" of the kingdom of God, and to ordain

[1] Schaff's History of Christian Church, v. ii., p. 258.

officers and teachers of the infant churches; they were in some sense superior to the ordinary "pastor," they caught light from the "apostles," and they formed, also, we think, an *extraordinary* office belonging to the needs of that early period; being, as it were, a kind of extension of the apostolic office, doing that publishing and planting work, that breaking of new ground, which was the apostles' peculiar business; it was a multiplication of the apostles, since they could not be everywhere. If any, therefore, deserve to be considered as successors of the apostles, it was the first "evangelists." The εὐαγγέλιον itself was a *new* thing, as the word shows; and the "evangelists" were the first heralds of this good news; their work was almost wholly a missionary work. They blew the trumpet to announce the coming of the organized host. But when Christianity was once planted, and some permanent growth in knowledge and faith was attained, the office of the "evangelist" ceased; and it did not continue to be part and parcel of the regular working system of the established Christian church. Neander says (Planting and Training, p. 94), "According to the original Christian phraseology, the term could only denote one whose calling it was to publish the doctrine of salvation to men, and thereby to lay the foundation of the Christian church; on the contrary, the pastor or teacher presupposed faith in the doctrine of salvation, and a church already founded, and employed himself in the further training in Christian knowledge."

The oldest commentators generally agree that the office of "evangelist" belonged to the period of inaugurating Christianity, and passed away as a special office with that period.

Some of the apostles themselves did the work of "evangelists," such as Paul, whose life was one series of missionary tours; but there were other "evangelists" besides the apostles; and it is a noteworthy fact that long after Timothy was made a "bishop," — if he were ever made one, — he is exhorted by Paul to "*do the work of an evangelist*,"

as if his dignity as "bishop" was not, at least, superior to that of "evangelist;" indeed, Timothy and Titus were more properly "evangelists" than "bishops," for they made the "bishops," or "pastors," as the apostles did.

Although this was an extraordinary office, and although it confuses our idea of the ministry to consider it as still a regular office of the church, yet the "evangelist" element still exists in the Christian church and ministry. The ever new proclamation of the gospel to the heathen world requires this work; indeed, Dr. Anderson, whose authority is of weight in this question, is, if we mistake not, strenuous upon the point that this office is a regular office of the church; perhaps it is a regular work, rather than office. It represents the aggressive spirit of Christianity in its assaults upon the power of darkness at home and abroad. The gospel, as a *new* thing, must still be proclaimed to vast masses of ignorant and heathen minds.

A custom has grown up with the exigencies of the missionary spirit recently developed in the church, and which has been greatly increased by the needs that the war gave rise to, for the churches to ordain "evangelists," "missionaries," and "pastors at large." This custom is, however, opposed to strict congregational usage, which forbids the ordaining of a minister excepting as connected with and resulting from the call of a particular church (Punchard, Cong. Dic., pp. 170–278; Upham, Rat. Dis., pp. 86–94). Still, it has been done more or less of late; the process is, that the church of which the "evangelist" or "missionary" who is to be appointed is a member, or any other church that consents, issues letters-missive; and his ordination by a council thus called entitles him to gather a church among heathen people, or in unchristianized districts, or in the army, to administer the sacraments, and to enter upon all the rights and duties of pastors. This right of ordination is claimed to be founded upon Acts 13: 23, or the scriptural institution of "evangelist." There is an interesting passage in Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History (B. III.,

c. 37), which throws some light upon this subject, and gives us his idea of this office, or work. He is speaking of one Quadratus, in the reign of Trajan, toward the close of the first century. He calls him, and others like him, "evangelists," and says of them, "For many of the disciples at that time, animated with a more ardent love of the divine word, had first fulfilled the Saviour's precept by distributing their substance to the needy; afterward leaving their country, they performed the office of 'evangelists' to those who had not yet learned the faith, whilst, with a noble ambition to proclaim Christ, they also delivered to them the books of the holy Gospels. After laying the foundations of faith in foreign parts, as the particular object of their mission, and after appointing others as shepherds of the flocks, and committing to these the care of those that had been recently introduced, they went again to other regions and nations, with the grace and coöperation of God. The Holy Ghost also *still* wrought many wonders through them, so that, as soon as the gospel was heard, men voluntarily, in crowds, and eagerly, embraced the true faith with their whole minds." We see here that the work of the "evangelist" continued; but it was spoken of by Eusebius as something which belonged to the apostolic epoch of the propagating and planting of the church. If, therefore, we use the term or employ the office now, we think that it should be wholly in this sense of a *missionary* work, of going into new parts, and proclaiming new tidings.

The modern sense, held by some, of "evangelists," as constituting a separate office of the itinerant preacher, is not at all contained in the ancient idea of "evangelist;" and it is, we think, an unnecessary creation, as highly as we value the labors of many honored revival-preachers.[1] Such

[1] The decision of the council in Richmond, Vt., declarative of the evils of ordaining "evangelists" as "preachers at large," and "stated supplies," is generally upheld by the best ecclesiastical writers, and by most congregational churches.

quasi "pastors" tend to increase the inefficiency of the regular pastoral office, and to destroy its ancient scriptural foundations. It does not, therefore, seem to be advisable to regard the "evangelist" as any separate office or work distinct from that of the "pastor;" but that one should be ordained as a regular minister, and then set apart, if necessary, as Paul and Barnabas were, to the separate work of evangelization in some particularly needy and destitute field. Of course, necessity overrides the best rules; and there may be cases where ministers, like the Methodist "local preachers," are set apart without any special church, or even a special field, over which they are placed; but such cases are practically rare, and in such cases the pastoral work — the care of Christ's church — is generally the future and final aim; for even the foreign or home missionary, who goes forth into a new field as an "evangelist," expects to gather a church and become its pastor.

The revival of this "extraordinary office," as another regular ministerial title and office at the present day, is, we think, unnecessary; it introduces confusion; and many have thereby crept into the ministry, who were in no way fit for it. It is better to adhere to some general principle in this matter.

Τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους — "and some pastors and teachers." These titles are joined together as if signifying nearly the same thing. The "*καὶ*" here is evidently not a disjunctive expressing dissimilarity, but a simple connective of similar things. The sentence runs along mentioning different things, such as "apostles," "evangelists," &c., and then says, "pastors and teachers," joining these together in one breath, as if they were identical; and the absence of the article before *διδασκάλους* confirms it. This is the interpretation of Augustine and Jerome, Erasmus and Bengel, and of such modern commentators as Rückert, Harless, Turner, and Alford, who consider the two as

synonymous terms. Whatever distinction there is probably amounts to this — that in the name of "pastor" is contained something more of the "administrative" idea; in that of "teacher," more of the purely "didactic." The fact that this is the only instance of the use of ποιμήν as applied strictly to the ministerial office in the church, strengthens the idea that it is essentially the same as διδάσκαλος. Both of these titles presuppose a church already established, a faith already received. They signify the *ordinary* ministry of the regularly organized church, after the extraordinary planting work of "apostles" and "evangelists" was accomplished; they permanently occupy the field; the churches were left in the hands of the "pastors and teachers;" and these two are really one ministry, which we now call "the pastoral office." But let us look at this title of "pastor" more carefully.

Ποιμήν. This beautiful title of the ministerial office is derived from ποιμαίνω, "to feed a flock." It is, above all, an affectionate title, expressive of the genuine spirit of Christ, who is "the good Shepherd," i. e., "the true Shepherd." It recalls the good, kind, even tender relations of the true pastor to his people; his love for their souls; his spiritual, even rather than official, relations to them. The earliest representation of the Saviour in Christian art, is that of the shepherd bearing a lamb upon his shoulders. The word is first found in the Old Testament, where it is frequently applied, as in the 23d Psalm, to God, as if he were the true "pastor," who did all things essential for the care, nourishment, and salvation of his people. The idea of ποιμήν is, (1.) *Feeding* — he who nourishes, or instructs souls in divine truth. (2.) *Love* or *sympathy*. We can have little idea of the relation between the shepherd and the sheep in Eastern countries; they know his voice, and follow him as by a cord fastened in their deepest instincts. The true shepherd is he who thus lives always with his sheep, and loves them. He is no "hireling," doing his work for pay, but

from love. When a pastor has this sympathy with and for his people, he teaches the truth in its power, and sets forth the Christian graces in their beauty. (3.) *Self-sacrifice.* The Eastern shepherd is sometimes called upon to risk his life, and even lay it down, for his sheep; the self-sacrificing love of Christ for men, is represented in this relationship. (4.) *Watching, protecting, guiding, ruling.* Thus Homer calls the king "ποιμὴν λαῶν." It implies some genuine authority to guide and rule: in the case of the minister it does not imply ruling or presiding over by the mere force of ecclesiastical ordination, or even of superior knowledge, but by a moral and spiritual right, as belonging to him who is regularly appointed to dispense God's word and guide in spiritual things.

We esteem this authority of the Christian pastor to be essentially of a *moral* nature, or as the legitimate influence of an appointed teacher of truth, who holds a divinely instituted office, and who is himself a Christ-like man. He who does his pastoral duty faithfully will have power and authority enough; and if he desires more, this would seem to show the working in him of the ambitious principle. The Congregational idea of limiting the pastoral office to a single local church, is well adapted to repress the natural desire of man to aim after a wide and universal authority in the church. But still, we find that the very term ποιμήν, which is applied to Christ himself as head of the church, is applied to his minister; it would seem, therefore, at least, to imply the highest authority, of whatever kind it may be, which exists in any officer of the church.[1]

Διδάσκαλος. Neander thinks that this name might have been applied to any member of the church peculiarly gifted to teach, whether minister or not.[2] It may be true, as has been before hinted, that these names did not all originally

[1] Coleman's Primitive Christianity, p. 135.
[2] Planting and Training, ch. i., p. 36.

indicate separate offices, but rather distinctive gifts, when these gifts were more needed than they are now.

And, indeed, all the offices mentioned in the apostolic church sprang immediately from the body of the church itself, being developed naturally from the peculiar exigencies of that extraordinary period; as did, for instance, the office of "deacon." The man who was best suited for a particular service, whatever it might be, was chosen from the whole number of Christian believers; and yet, before the apostolic age was finished, there was a regularly established ministry.

This term διδάσκαλος generally denoted the ministry of what Neander calls "the internal guidance of the word;" or, as it is written in 1 Tim. 5: 17, who "labored in word and doctrine." It contains, as does ποιμήν, the essential idea of the Christian ministry, which is eminently a "ministry of the word;" and it is employed in no such connection as to destroy the identity between it and ποιμήν as this is set forth in Eph. 4: 11.

The "teacher," according to Neander, was he who was especially intrusted with the λόγος γνώσεως, the reflective and didactic quality — the "pastor" with the λόγος σοφίας, the prudential and administrative quality;[1] but these may be both united in one ministry. This calm and noble "teaching" office is essential in the Christian church, and is especially useful for edification; and it is sometimes lost sight of in the idea of the necessity of continual religious excitement to build up the church.

Let us now take up the two or three other principal remaining names, or titles, applied to the Christian ministry in the New Testament, which occur where there is evidence of an organization of the apostolic church more formal and permanent than is found in the earliest New Testament records.

[1] Planting and Training, ch. v., p. 89.

Πρεσβύτερος. This title was simply the transferring of the name of the presiding officer, or minister, of the Jewish synagogue to the presiding officer of the Christian church assembly, built upon the model of the synagogue worship.

The chief idea of *πρεσβύτερος*, both in the synagogue and Christian sense, was doubtless that of presiding, or ruling; he was the president of the ecclesiastical assembly.

There were also "teaching elders," as we see in Titus 1: 9, and 1 Tim. 5: 17, who were to be held in *special* honor; so that, at any rate, a *πρεσβύτερος* was no higher office than a *διδάσκαλος* or *ποιμήν*. If there was any difference in rank or order, the "teacher" or "preacher" came first. They were, in fact, identical, as in the passage in 1 Tim. 5: 17. The truth is, that, in a large field of labor assigned to the Christian presbyters, one felt himself drawn more to this, another to that portion, since the revelation of the Spirit was given to each *πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον*. But Paul honored more those elders, who, together with other duties, were engaged especially in the instruction and comfort of believers; because the capacity for this highest gift of the presbyteral office was not found in the same degree in all.[1]

The title or office of *πρεσβύτερος* came into use, probably, when the business of the church grew large and its details onerous to the apostles, just as the deacon's office was instituted.

The idea of *πρεσβύτερος* still remains in the ministry, in the presiding, moderating power of the Christian minister, in the exercise of the faculty of judgment in the affairs of the church, or what Bengel calls "*potestatem judicandi in ecclesia.*" Every minister is the president, or "ruling elder," of his church. The primitive "presbyter" was, however, the child of the church, springing from its body, and chosen by its election; he "ruled" in conjunction with the church, and recognized the real power to be in the people; his

[1] Lange's Commentary, *in loco.*

authority was regulative rather than strictly judicial.[1] In the early New England churches there were generally two elders, the "preaching" and the "ruling" elder; but this plan was formally abandoned after about fifty years.

Ἐπίσκοπος. This is derived from *ἐπισκέπτομαι* — to "look after," to "inspect," to "oversee." The term *ἐπίσκοπος* really occurs but five times in the New Testament. In 1 Pet. 2: 25, it is applied to Christ, as "Shepherd and Bishop of souls;" and here it is coupled with *ποιμήν*, as "pastor." In 1 Tim. 3: 2, it is used in such a sense as makes it beyond question identical with *πρεσβύτερος*. It is the more purely Greek title of "presbyter," and is used uniformly in relation to Gentile churches, as a title which they could better understand than the Jewish one of *πρεσβύτερος*. In Acts 20: 17, 18, it is also used interchangeably with the office of *πρεσβύτερος*. Here the apostle tells the "presbyters" of the church at Ephesus, that the Holy Ghost had made them "bishops" over the flock — to feed, to act the "pastor" to (*ποιμαίνειν*), the church of God; and this last is also nearly equivalent to *διδάσκαλος*, or teacher, so that we have the four terms together here as nearly, if not quite, identical. The essential identity of "bishop" and "presbyter" is also seen in Titus 1: 5, 7, and in 1 Pet. 5: 1, 2. The use of the verb *ἐπισκοπέω* to signify "acting as presbyter," as in 1 Pet. 5: 2, 3, seems to confirm this identity. Jerome, in a well-known passage, says, "*apud veteres iidem episcopi et presbyteri, quia illud nomen dignitatis est, hoc ætatis.*"[2] Chrysostom affirms the identity of the two, saying that there were many "bishops," i. e., "presbyters," in the same church. Augustine, in his day, when the church had become thoroughly episcopal, remarks thus upon this point: "The office of 'bishop' is above the office of 'presbyter,' not by the authority of Scripture, but after the names of honor which

[1] Coleman's Primitive Christianity, on this title.

[2] Epist. ad Oceanum; also Comment. ad Tit. 1: 7.

the custom of the church hath now obtained." Neander regards the two titles as convertible terms.[1]

The office of ἐπίσκοπος in the apostolic church was a modest office, and implied no hierarchical dignity;[2] we never find it confounded with the office of the apostles. It signified the "spiritual superintendent," or "overseer," of a religious body, or church; or, possibly, when Gentile churches were beginning to be formed in great numbers, and the larger Gentile element was making itself felt, men were appointed to "supervise" the organization of these Gentile churches, to settle them into their established forms and working.

Whately, in his Kingdom of Christ, says, "Again, it seems to have been at least the general, if not the universal, practice of the apostles to appoint over each separate *church* a *single* individual as a chief governor, under the title of 'angel' (i. e., legate from the apostles) or 'bishop' (i. e., superintendent or overseer). A church and a diocese seem to have been for a considerable time coextensive and identical."[3] The original "bishop" was, we believe, the spiritual guide or teacher of one local church — in fact, its "pastor." Diocesan episcopacy, or the system of the bishopric of a plurality of churches, or of a district, though, indeed, it began to appear as early as the second century, and was fully established in Cyprian's time, is held by Whately to be an essential departure from the original New Testament office of "bishop;" and this is also the freely-expressed opinion of Dr. Barrow, and many of the most learned men of the English established church in past and present times.

The scriptural office of ἐπίσκοπος, like that of πρεσβύτερος, was not the earliest office or title of the ministry, but sprang up in the later days of the apostles, through a necessity for a stronger administration or supervision of the church; as

[1] Neander's Planting and Training, B. III., p. 92.
[2] Hase's Hist. of Chr. Ch., § 42.
[3] P. 131, Lon. ed.

Vinet says, "It was an expedient, not an institution."[1] It certainly implied no exclusive and permanent order, that disturbed and destroyed the parity of the ministry, and assumed apostolical authority.

The true idea of ἐπίσκοπος, as now existing in the ministry, is that of "general direction or superintendency of all the affairs of the church, external and internal;" and the humblest minister should not lose sight of the apostolic counsels to the "bishop," by supposing that they cannot apply to him. If he is a regularly called and ordained minister of the gospel, truly serving Christ in his high calling, let him feel that he is a "bishop" in the church of God, and has an "excellent office."

These New Testament titles of ἐπίσκοπος, ποιμήν, διδάσκαλος, and πρεσβύτερος, as has been hinted, stand for essentially the same office, and are employed as convertible terms. We have seen that "pastor" and "teacher," in Eph. 4 : 11, designate, grammatically, essentially the same office; and they are never used in other places in such a way as to render a distinction necessary. We have seen, also, that "presbyter," in those cases where it applies to an officer of the Christian church, as far as the Scripture shows, is spoken of as the *only* officer of the church besides "deacons." If so, then "presbyter" is an identical office with "pastor and teacher," which terms are always applied to the permanent chief officer of the church. We have seen, also, that "bishop" is used as a convertible term with "presbyter;" things, then, that are equal to another thing are equal to each other. Nor is there anything in the duties or requirements of any of these to separate it from the rest. The qualifications of "elders and bishops" are given in two elaborate passages — in Tit. 1 : 6–10, and 1 Tim. 3 : 2–7; and they are almost verbally identical.

Neither can it be proved from the New Testament that a

[1] Pas. Theol., p. 30.

higher official standing was assigned to one than to another. There were, doubtless, degrees of dignity among the primitive ministers of the gospel, arising from age, priority of call, distinguished services, or other circumstances, just as there are now among our own venerated ministers and honored missionaries. Thus the apostles had a peculiar rank and authority; and among them, James, as surviving the rest, and continuing in Jerusalem, gathered to himself the natural and confessed right of presidency; but there is no proof of any real inequality, or absolute want of identity, in these titles of the ministerial office, or anything belonging to one of them, which could not, and should not, be exercised by any other; so that we conclude that these titles all denote the ordinary office of the ministry, as different phases of one office, viewing it from different historical points of view. Undoubtedly they convey different and distinct ideas, but not sufficiently so to indicate separate offices, and they might all apply to one office. Calvin adheres to this view in Institutes, B. IV., chap. iii.

A few remaining titles are given, in the New Testament, to the ministerial work; which, however, imply certain varied ideas, or characteristic features, of the work, rather than special and distinct ministerial functions.

Πρεσβεύω—"to act as ambassador" of Jesus Christ, which gives a high idea of the true greatness and dignity of the pastoral office.

Οἰκονόμος—"steward," as in 1 Cor. 4: 2—"stewards of the mysteries of God"—a sublime trust.

Ἄγγελος—"angel," "legate," "proclaimer,"—the one who leads the worship of the church. Massillon, in his Charge I., says, "A pastor is charged with the welfare of God's people; he is one of those messengers who are continually ascending and descending the ladder of Jacob: he

descends from it in order that he may acquaint himself with the necessities of the church; he ascends by prayer, that he may bear them before the throne of God, and open the bosom of inexhaustible compassion upon the wants of the gospel fold." Massillon elsewhere speaks of pastors as the "visible angels" appointed to conduct the souls of men to heaven.

Συνεργὸς Θεοῦ — "laborer together with God."

Ἀρχιτέκτων — "architect," or "builder" — one who superintends the ordering or building of the church of God.

Στρατιώτης Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ — "soldier of Jesus Christ."

These names, and others similar to them, speak for themselves, and they set before us the greatness and dignity of the work of the ministry.

The pastoral office is also called, in 2 Cor. 4 : 1, *διακονίαν* — translated in our version "ministry," from which comes our common term "ministry." It means, literally, "waiting upon," or "service," and is used here in a more general sense of the word, and not for the office of "deacon." Perhaps the use of *διάκονος* in 1 Tim. 3 : 8–13 applies also to the ministerial office; but this is doubtful. At all events, the idea of "serving" or "waiting upon" the church, which is the main idea, is an important one; the minister is "the servant of all for Jesus' sake."

From this survey of the scriptural titles, functions, ideas, and facts, that enter into the original scriptural or divine institution of the pastoral office, we are forced to the conclusion, which, in fact, has been suggested all along, that while a regular and permanent office of the Christian ministry was divinely instituted, and its fundamental principles were clearly laid down for all time, yet its outward historical form was left in a great measure to be decided upon and

shaped by the wisdom of the church, according to the pressure of circumstances. We are not such bigoted sectarians as to suppose that our own form of church polity (though we hold it to be, on the whole, the most scriptural) is so perfect that it involves an essential error to adopt another form of church polity. True Congregationalists, while they love and honor their own system, love and honor, even more, that common spiritual truth which it enshrines, and which, in our imperfect humanity, may develop itself under many varying outward forms.

We are strengthened in this view by the spirit of the following comprehensive remarks upon scriptural *omissions*, from Whately's Kingdom of Christ, p. 77, Lon. ed. : —

"No such thing is to be found in our Scriptures as a catechism, or regular elementary introduction to the Christian religion; nor do they furnish us with anything of the nature of a systematic creed, set of articles, confession of faith, or whatever other name one may designate a regular, complete compendium of Christian doctrines; nor, again, do they supply us with a liturgy for ordinary public worship, or with forms of administering the sacraments, or for conferring holy orders; nor even do they give any precise directions as to these and other ecclesiastical matters, or anything that at all corresponds to a rubric or set of canons. Now, these *omissions* present a complete moral demonstration that the apostles and their followers must have been supernaturally withheld from recording a great part of the institutions, instructions, and regulations, which must, in point of fact, have proceeded from them; withheld on purpose that the other churches, in other ages and regions, might not be led to consider themselves bound to adhere to the several formularies, customs, and rules that were of local and temporary appointment, but might be left to their own discretion in matters in which it seemed best to Divine Wisdom that they should be so left."

Whately, in his defence of Episcopacy, takes the ground

that there is nothing in this system contrary to Scripture; and on the consideration that the matter of church form was left to the wisdom of the church, and was a secondary question, he thinks that the Episcopal form is the best, and historically the oldest. While not controverting the right of other believers to maintain different views of church policy, and of the peculiar form of the pastoral office in its outward aspects, we hold to the simple idea of the ministry as more scriptural and more accordant with the genius of the gospel. We hold, also, that not only *a* ministry is distinctly established in the Scriptures, but that the regularly ordained Christian "pastor" may and should unite in himself alone, all the titles, virtues, duties, gifts, and rights, that are bestowed in the entire New Testament upon this divinely instituted office.

§ 28. *The Idea of the Pastoral Office.*

There are certain prevalent ideas of the pastoral office which are erroneous and injurious, but which, nevertheless, are held by large numbers; and let us notice these before endeavoring to set forth the true idea of the Christian ministry.

1. That it forms *a distinct ecclesiastical order, or superior sacerdotal class*, in the Christian church. While we do not deny that the individual minister may have his own proper rights and honorable place in the church, yet we hold that the ministers of the church, taken together as a body, do not form a separate order, or a distinct superior class, in the church. That the ministry is not thus an exclusive order, further than any institution, divinely established for a special work, constitutes an order, might be proved, (*a.*) From *Scripture*, from a class of passages similar to the one in 2 Cor. 4: 5, "*For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake;*" from the examples of the apostles; from the essential unity of the

church and of church members; and, above all, from the example of Christ, the antitype of pastors, as in Phil. 2: 7, Matt. 20: 27; and from the lessons of Christ's humility, as when he washed the feet of his disciples. (*b.*) From a *Christianized reason.* Vinet compares ministers to officers in an army.[1] They have a certain official preëminence, it is true, conferred on them; but the captains by themselves do not form a peculiar class or order, nor do the colonels, nor do the generals; they are all *soldiers;* all rise from the bosom of the army, being made officers only for greater service and division of labor, and not to create a new peculiar body or order of men. This illustration, it must be said, is drawn from an ideal army, rather than from one of the common character of armies. Yet the French or Napoleonic idea of the army — that every member, through capacity and distinguished conduct, is eligible to the highest office, and that the officers are taken thus from the body of the army — is the main idea of the illustration. Vinet again says, more explicitly, "The ministry does not form a caste. It does not form a body, except accidentally. The accident is certainly frequent, but it still remains an accident. Existence as a body is not essential to the ministry. To conclude in a word, the ecclesiastical ministry is a *consecration*, made under conditions, of particular members of a Christian flock, to be occupied specially, but not to the exclusion of others, in the administration of worship and care of souls. A religious society may, moreover, direct that the solemnities which bring it together shall be presided over exclusively by those special men whom it calls ministers or pastors."[2]

To endeavor to create this ministerial order or caste, toward which some persons seem to be always edging, is contrary to a sound Christian instinct, and is beneath the simple Christian idea of the ministry. The church was made before its ministry: ministers are its servants, endowed by

[1] Pastoral Theology, p. 46. [2] Idem, p. 50.

it with authority to serve. The ministry is a distinct and permanent office in the church of Christ, — that we hold, — but we do not believe that ministers of and by themselves form any distinct and superior order in the church. As our office is divinely instituted and guided, let us honor it and magnify it; but we shall do this best, not by attempting to give it a merely human rank, but by preserving the pure and consecrated spirit which characterized its original and divine institution. The true ground of ministerial precedence, or dignity, is stated in 1 Thess. 5 : 12, that ministers should be honored "*for their works' sake.*" It is a highly honorable office; and while it is not an exclusive order in the church, yet the words anciently spoken to the church still remain obligatory in some true sense. "*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief.*"

2. That it is a *priesthood.*

What is a priest? "He is one who stands as mediator between God and his people, and brings the people of God by reason of certain ceremonial acts which he performs for them, and which they could not perform for themselves without profanation, because they are at a distance from God, and cannot in their own persons approach him." Christianity has done away with the need and fact of such a mediating priesthood. The priestly idea of the ministry arose in the Christian church, first through corrupting Jewish teachers in the great Gentile cities, when the power of Judaism was broken up at home. Pagan priestly ideas helped to increase the error; and these ideas, growing stronger and stronger for centuries, received their final and perfect crystallization in the Papal system of priesthood, and formally, in the twenty-third session of the Council of Trent, when it was decreed that "if any one shall say that there is not in the New Testament a visible and external priesthood, or that there is no power in it of consecrating and offering the

body and blood of the Lord, and of remitting and retaining sins, but only an office of the bare ministry of preaching the gospel, or that those who do not preach the gospel are not priests, let him be anathema." Without going to this extreme, other churches, which admit the hierarchical element, have a tendency to regard the clergy as "the legitimate channel of communication with God" — as the "depository of divine grace" — as the only efficacious administrators of the holy rites. In this view, when it is carried to an extreme, the eucharist becomes a "sacrifice," and the minister the "priest;" baptism is a regenerating ordinance, and the minister a dispenser of the Holy Spirit; and thus, logically, he is empowered with authority to procure and proclaim absolution of sins. This idea of the priesthood of the Christian ministry is erroneous and hurtful: (1.) Because *contrary to Scripture.* The New Testament ministry strove to *avoid* being considered merely ceremonial, or ritual instruments; Paul thanked God that he had baptized so few. While in the Scriptures all Christians are called "a holy priesthood" through Christ, there is but one passage in the New Testament where a Christian minister is called a "priest" — in Rom. 15: 16; and here the apostle does not call himself a "priest," but only compares himself to the Jewish priesthood, using the term in an illustrative or figurative sense: this omission would seem to settle the question. That which is called "the power of the keys" is a judicial attribute belonging to the whole church, — minister and people, — rather than a sacerdotal attribute, belonging exclusively to the ministry. Pastor Harms, indeed, held it to be a ministerial function; and F. W. Robertson felt that once in his life he pronounced judicial sentence upon a sinner. But the apostles, as in Acts 3: 12, indignantly repelled the idea of any peculiar or priestly sacredness to be ascribed to themselves. (2.) Because it is *derogatory to the Lord Jesus Christ;* it diminishes his great and permanent work of mediation, impugns his unchangeable and

incommunicable priesthood, and thus tends to subvert pure faith. Every believer has a personal, direct, immediate relation to God, and may, in Christ's name, offer the intercessory prayer, although Christ is really the only intercessor; and while all believers are made in Christ "priests unto God," there is, and can be, really but one "priest," in whom all have access by a common faith to the Father. "*For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.*" (3.) Because it is *contrary to the nature and design of the Christian church.* It gradually and resistlessly shapes the church after itself into a hierarchy of which the clergy become the prescriptive rulers: in fact, where this idea decidedly predominates, the bishops and inferior clergy are considered as properly constituting the church, and the people are as an adjunct or ornament pinned on to the clergy. Powers are assumed by the church (thus appropriated by the clergy) which belong only to Christ; the means of grace are made the authors of grace; the instrument is viewed as the power, or source of power, until, in the minds of the more ignorant and unthinking, the mediatorship is transferred from the divine Saviour to the human ecclesiastic — the logical and tremendous consequence of this idea, which is, and has been, a fruitful source of evil in the church. (4.) Because it is singularly affiliated with a certain resistless downward tendency in human nature *to serve God by proxy.* Men naturally love an easy religion, a religion which, without requiring of them great personal service and sacrifice, at the same time soothes and satisfies the religious sentiment; and good men are sometimes not naturally indisposed to take upon themselves great labors, and toils, and responsibilities for others, if, by so doing, they become, in some sense, the keepers of consciences, and the sources of religious authority.

While we thus strongly affirm that the Christian ministry is not a "priesthood," neither in the Hebrew nor Romish

sense, and while we would not retain "a rag or tag" of that erroneous theory, yet we would not deny that certain sentiments which are derived from the ancient priestly office in the church, may not still irresistibly and innocently linger about the office of the Christian ministry: for example, the pastor is especially called upon to pray for his people, even as Christ, the true Intercessor, intercedes for them; and then, too, there is a natural desire or impulse in men to confess their faults to their fellow-men, — the child confesses his wrong doings to his mother, and finds relief, — and so, to a certain extent, so far as the pastor is worthy of such trust, and so far as the confession is made spontaneously, and for the sole purpose of religious counsel, he naturally and properly receives, in reference to spiritual doubts, fears, and even sometimes sins, the confidence of his people. Something, too, of the priestly office, in the case of sickness, affliction, and death, where the power of souls to act for themselves is enfeebled, is manifested in the ministrations of the pastor; but these are solely ideas, sentiments, and voluntary expressions of pious service and fraternal sympathy, and in no sense are they the result of a divinely appointed priestly office which plays the part of mediator in spiritual things.

3. That it is a merely temporary relation of "*guide, philosopher, and friend.*"

The office has degenerated into something like this in religious denominations that do not recognize the need of faith in the sacrifice of Christ, which is the root of the Christian ministry; and it amounts to this with some of the most extreme of them — that advantage is taken of a customary official solemnity to appoint a man to preach *himself*, to teach his own moral and philosophical opinions, or to disseminate them with somewhat more of *ex cathedrâ* authority.

There is, also, a tendency among evangelical bodies, and ministers, to secularize the divine office, and to consider it

a conventional or business relationship, in which the minister is paid for his work, and there is no debt incurred on either side; but in this way the pastor destroys the foundation on which he stands, and denies the only right he has to preach and teach others. If this right or relation is actually nothing more than that of a friend, no man has authority to set himself up as a religious teacher of other men. That the relation of a pastor to his people is, on the contrary, a higher spiritual relationship, and thus in some sense a sacred and eternal one, we see, —

(*a.*) Because it is a divine institution. (*b.*) Because the minister deals with eternal truths. (*c.*) Because at the eternal judgment he must give an account of his stewardship as a pastor of souls. (*d.*) Because his teachings, labors, aims, and life, all tell upon an eternal destiny; his is no temporary service. (*e.*) Because the mutual relations of a pastor and people are not those of intellectual admiration, or sentimental affection, or interested friendship, but those of regenerated and sanctified hearts, which relations are eternal.

Yet, as is true of the two former views of the ministry, which were erroneous when objectively viewed as a whole, but which yet had something true in them in a reflective and partial sense, so in the relation upon which we have just animadverted there is contained something that always and universally applies to the office of the ministry. The Christian pastor is, or ought to be, the true guide, philosopher, and friend of his people; for he teaches them the highest philosophy — that which centralizes and harmonizes truth; he strives for their best welfare — that of their souls; and he actually guides them into the way of eternal life. And in common life, in all ordinary and social relations, he is the sincere and unselfish friend of his people, he gives them his aid freely, "*without money and without price*," and is able truly to call them, and they to call him, "*beloved*."

Other false, perverted, or exaggerated ideas of the pastoral office might be noticed; but we would now directly

state, in but a few words, what we conceive to be, in the main, the true idea of the ministry.

The Christian ministry is *a divinely appointed and divinely guided office in the church, to sow the "word of God," which is the gospel of Jesus Christ, in the hearts of men, that they may learn to love and serve the living God, and to lead lives of active benevolence and goodness, in imitation of Christ.* That is its fundamental idea and design. The ministry is a "ministry of the word." The minister is "the man who speaks the word of God; he does not recite it. The priest was a slave, but the minister has a free intercourse with God."[1]

There are other subordinate ideas of the ministry. It is a special office of the church to serve the church in various ways. The minister presides in the business affairs of the church; he conducts the public worship; he exercises care for the moral and spiritual interests of his people, by daily personal ministrations; he administers the rites of baptism and the Lord's supper; he oversees the charities of the church, and attends upon the wants of the poor, the sick, and the afflicted; he prepares candidates for admission to the church, and has a regulative voice in the church's discipline; he guides the spiritual and benevolent activities of his people; and, perhaps, one half of his actual efficiency for good lies outside of the pulpit, in what may be strictly called his pastoral duties; but in all he is still engaged in sowing the good word of God in the hearts of men, and in building up the kingdom of truth.

Although this divine word that he dispenses is found in man, in nature, in all things, yet Christ's minister finds it chiefly in Christ's words, in the Scriptures of truth, with the Holy Spirit as their interpreter; therefore he must himself know in order to teach; he must teach men in the spirit of

[1] Vinet's Pastoral Theology, p. 24.

Christ; and here is the deepest idea of the pastoral office: *to dispense the word of Christ in the power, spirit, and love of Christ, that we may be "able ministers of the New Testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."*

We cite a few texts setting forth and confirming this conception of the design of the pastoral office: Matt. 28: 19, 20; Acts 4: 29; 6: 4; 20: 24, 28; Rom. 10: 14, 15; 1 Cor. 1: 17; 1: 21; 2: 4; 2 Cor. 4: 1, 2; 2: 17; 2 Tim. 1: 13; 2: 15; 4: 1; Titus 1: 3; 1: 9; 1 Pet. 4: 11.

The Christian pastor should pray with Paul (Gal. 1: 16), "*to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him;*" and he should be able to say, also, with the apostle (2 Cor. 4: 5), "*For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.*"

§ 29. *The Model of the Pastor.*

There are strong pointings of Scripture to the actual as well as the ideal "pastor" of men, who, in all ages, has fed and guided their souls, not only through the "green pastures," but through the "wilderness;" who nourished them with the bread of life, not only in the Desert of Sinai, but by the shore of the Sea of Galilee. 1 Peter 2: 25, "*The chief Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.*" Matt. 23: 10, "*Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ.*" Matt. 28: 20, "*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*"

Such passages point to the great model, whose example the pastor should follow, and who was himself the "good" or perfect "Shepherd." This is a truth which has been already touched upon, and is obvious; but it is exceedingly important that it should be fixed early and deeply in the pastor's mind. The character of Jesus, it is true, forbids his possible classification, in all respects, with men; yet

he was a true man, and he said to his earliest disciples, "*Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.*" And they did follow him; they learned his patient and gentle ways of dealing with men; they learned his mode of teaching; they caught his lofty and loving spirit. The apostle Paul considered Christ to be his model as a pastor, as well as a Christian; and living pastors, looking beyond Paul, Peter, and John, and every human example, should do the same.

When George Herbert took holy orders, he said, "I will consecrate all my learning and all my poor abilities to advance the glory of that God that gave them, knowing that I can never do too much for Him that hath done so much for me as to make me a Christian; and *I will labor to be like my Saviour*, by making humility lovely in the eyes of all men, and by following the merciful and meek example of my dear Jesus."

We cannot go into a minute analysis of those qualities of character and action in which a pastor should strive to be like Christ; but we would desire to mark impressively the fact that the pastor should look through and beyond every other model up to Christ. There are four points especially where Christ meets man as pastor, or guide: in his mental, moral, affectional, and spiritual being; and on these he should especially fix his attention.

1. *As a teacher.* It is an animating thought that "*the word which we preach first began to be spoken of the Lord.*" Christ's teaching, as we have before characterized it, was personal, addressed to the individual — to what essentially constitutes the individual — his true self. The pastor's teaching should have this *personal directness* and earnest aim; it should go deep, and reach the enduring principles and choices of the soul, which make character, which a man carries with him into eternity. It should not play about the intellect, nor even address wholly the conscience, but should aim at the ruling will, affections, and spirit.

As to the manner of our Lord's teaching, it was, generally speaking, to drop the word of life in the soul as a seed, rather than as a fully-developed truth; and then the soul itself, in its own life and growth, might take up this truth, and bring it to its perfect maturity by its own thought and voluntary act, while it is watered and helped from on high. Thus the truth became incorporated in the being, while the soul was left freely to do its part. Christ did not make all plain, but sought to arouse in the soul itself the sense of God, of human dependence, of sin, of the need of redemption, repentance, faith, and prayer.[1] The source of every teacher's success is to have "faith in the power of truth, as adapted to change the moral condition of men, and thus to bring in a better life."

There are some things in Christ's teaching which should not, and cannot, be followed; as, for example, his infallible assertion of truth on his own authority; but in his method of teaching, his simplicity, naturalness, adaptation, gentleness, we are to make him our model.

2. *As a character of moral blamelessness.* Christ's power as guide and pastor of other men arose from the fact that he "*was without sin.*" By his obedience to the law, and by the power of his goodness, he opened every prison door, and proclaimed liberty to every captive. His goodness gave to his sacrifice a profound merit, and made it able to cleanse sin from the depths of the soul. Because of his perfect goodness, men might put their trust in him to feed them with the bread of everlasting life. The minister of his pure gospel should pray and strive to approximate more nearly to the blamelessness of Christ, and to appropriate more of his moral purity, knowing that every gain in goodness is a gain in power; and we are, moreover, commanded to be "*holy as he is holy;*" to be "*followers of God as dear children.*"

[1] Neander's Life of Christ, Hooper's ed., p. 106.

3. *As one who had true sympathy with men.* Christ shared in all things human. In the body, mind, and spirit of man, and all their varied wants and experiences, he truly entered. He was even "*tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*" He is, therefore, "*touched with a feeling of our infirmities*," for he was himself tried and tempted. Neander says, in his Life of Christ, he became human, "so that his soul might be moved to its depths by sympathy with the sufferings of mankind on account of sin." That noble word "sympathy" (*σύν-πάθος*) — "suffering with," being in common in the very same things that we do and suffer — Christ perfectly realized. He showed "a special, separate, discriminating sympathy, as in the case of erring Peter, derided Zaccheus, and the dead Lazarus." Something of this Christ-like power of sympathy every true pastor should have; and yet, perhaps, here is often the most profound failure. There may be sometimes every other quality but this. St. Vincent de Paul said (with a touch of fanatical yet noble extravagance), "If it has pleased God to employ weak men for the conversion of some souls, these souls have themselves confessed that it was by the patience and sympathy which had been shown them. Even the convicts among whom I have lived can be gained in no other way. When I have kissed their chains, and showed them compassion for their distress, and sensibility for their disgrace, then they have listened to me, then they have given glory to God, and placed themselves in the way of salvation." Men do not want outer charity as much as they want real sympathy and love. One ray of that is worth more to the pastor, to melt men's proud, suspicious hearts, than to play on them for years the cold splendors of the intellect. Those were remarkable words of Serjeant Talfourd, shortly before his death: "What the thirsting and perishing nations of men long for is not benevolence, but sympathy — the brother's heart to be shown to them." This quality is not weak sensibility, but the action of true love, the spirit of

the cross in its real operation, which is the power of God to draw and save. Vinet has some beautiful remarks on this point (Pas. Theol., p. 34). He says, "Still, all these metaphors, all the additional passages, do not attain to the complete sum of the elements of the ministry — to the ideal of a pastor. We have need of a type, a *model*, a personification of each idea. Where shall we look first? If any one has been the type of man, he has been, at the same time, the type of a pastor; for it is impossible that the pastor should not make a part of the ideal of man; impossible that he in whom the perfection of human nature was fully represented should not have been a pastor. This new man, this second Adam, could not have been such except by love. The first object of love is that which is immortal in man. It is, then, upon the soul that love will chiefly exercise itself; and as we cannot do good to the soul except through its regeneration, and as it cannot be regenerated except by the truth, to nourish the soul with truth, to feed it thus in green pastures, and along tranquil waters, was necessarily the office of a perfect man, of the type of man. He must have been a pastor."

4. *As one who had the spirit of self-sacrifice.* This, indeed, is the natural result and crowning grace of the pastoral spirit. Our Saviour's love went to the perfect surrender of himself for those he loved; to the laying down of his life. Brainerd, when he labored among the Indians, said that "he thought of nothing else, he cared for nothing else, but their conversion. He dreamed of it in the night, and he lived for it in the day." A passage from F. W. Robertson's letter to a friend about to become a settled pastor is an affecting illustration of this point: "Most sincerely I congratulate you on your prospect of a curacy, but much more on the approach of the highest earthly honor, — the privilege of working for Christ, — and welcome you to a participation of its joys and sorrows. Perhaps the latter predominate here, but they are not worthy to be compared

to the joys which shall be revealed in us, if we suffer with him. I think the strictness of self-examination for ministerial fitness is contained in that solemn, searching question of our Lord, thrice repeated, 'Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?' And if we can answer from our inmost souls, as Peter did, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee,' I believe the injunction which follows, and the warning of martyrdom, would be received with equal joy as our Master's will. I am sensible that it is a test that makes me humble."

§ 30. *The Call to the Ministry.*

We will consider briefly the *necessity*, *nature*, and *signs* of a divine call to the ministry.

1. *Necessity of a divine call.* This is seen, —

(*a.*) From *Scripture.* The scriptural idea of the ministry being that of one who undertakes a particular charge or work, this implies the special calling or sending of him who is to do the special work. In the Old Testament we find this idea expressed, Numbers 18 : 7, "*I have given your priest's office unto you as a service of gift; and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death.*" Is. 6 : 8, "*Here am I, O Lord; send me.*" Is. 61 : 1, "*The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted.*" Jer. 1 : 4–7, "*Then the word of the Lord came upon me, saying, Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak.*" Jer. 23 : 32, "*Behold, I am against them*

that prophesy false dreams, saith the Lord, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies and by their lightness; yet I sent them not nor commanded them; therefore they shall not profit their people at all, saith the Lord." He who being unsent preaches God's word, preaches to no profit; it has been so in the past, and it is so now. In the New Testament, our Lord applied to his own ministry the passage in Is. 61 : 1. In Matt. 3 : 16, 17, the baptism of Christ into his ministerial work is described; and in Matt. 17 : 5 is contained the confirmation of Christ's own call to preach the gospel.

In John 12 : 28–30, Christ appeals to the fact of his being called to preach; and through him, thus divinely called, all other Christian ministers have their vocation to preach the gospel. In John 8, Christ speaks of himself as the only door into this ministry; all who come in by any other way are thieves and robbers; he only is a true shepherd who is appointed by the chief Shepherd. John 20 : 21, "*Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*" Acts 13 : 2, "*As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Paul for the work whereunto I have called them.*" Acts 20 : 28, "*Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flocks over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God.*" 1 Cor. 1, "*Paul, called to be an apostle through the will of God.*" Tit. 1 : 3, "*But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour.*" 2 Tim. 1 : 9, "*Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling.*" This language might, and very probably does, refer especially to a calling into the Christian ministry, which was shared both by Paul and Timothy.

(*b.*) *From the best human testimony.* Luther's language is strong. "*Expecta vocantem; interim esto securus; imo si esses sapientior ipso Salomone et Daniele, tamen, nisi voce-*

ris, plus quam infernum fuge, ne verbum effundas. Si tui eguerit, vocabit te. Si non vocabit, non te rumpat scientia tua. Nunquam enim Deus fortunat laborem eorum, qui non sunt vocati; et quanquam quædam salutaria afferant, tamen nihil ædificant. E regione, magna semper fecerunt, qui, Deo vocante, docuerint." In his commentary upon Gal. 1: 1, Luther says, "When I was but a young divine, methought Paul did unwisely in glorying so oft of his calling in all his Epistles; but I did not understand his purpose, for I knew not that the ministry of God's word was so weighty a matter."

Bishop Burnet, in his Pastoral Care (cap. 7), says, "I wish it were well considered by all clerks, what it is to run without being called or sent; and so to thrust one's self into the vineyard without being called or sent; and so to thrust one's self into the field, without staying till God, by his providence, puts a piece of work into his hands. This will give a man a vast ease in his thoughts, and a great satisfaction in all his labors, if he knows that no practice of his own, but merely the directions of providence, have put him in a post." Also in cap. 6, discussing the question of ordination, he asks the candidate, "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office? Certainly the answer of this ought to be well considered; for if any one says, 'I trust so,' that yet knows nothing of any such motion, and can give no account of it, he lies to the Holy Ghost, and makes his first approach to the altar with a lie in his mouth, and that not to man, but to God."

Philip Henry, in answer to a question put him on this point at his ordination, said, "As far as, upon search and inquiry, I can hitherto find, though there be that within me that would seek great things for myself (if, indeed, they were to be found in this calling), yet with my mind I seek them not. But the improvement of the talent which I have received in the service of the gospel, for the glory of God

and the salvation of souls, I hope is in my eyes. If there be anything else, I own it not — I allow it not. While so many 'seek their own,' it is my desire, and it shall be my endeavor, to 'seek the things of Jesus Christ.'"

Massillon, in one of his clerical charges, says, "If you do not feel in yourselves a desire of being employed as ambassadors of God, judge ye yourselves, whether ye are called into the Lord's vineyard. God implants a love in the heart for the service to which he calls; and better would it be for you to have felt, that it was not the ministry for which you were intended, than that you should possess a want of inclination for the performance of its duties. It is not necessary that a voice from heaven should say to you in secret, 'The Lord has not sent you.' Your judgment, confirmed by the dictates of your conscience, tells you so."

Vinet (Pas. Theol. p. 76) says, "We must, then, be called of God. A call to the ministry which is exercised in the name of God, and in which he is represented, can emanate only from him. The business here, in fact, is not ours; it is another's, and that is God; in a word, it is a *ministry*. Whether external or internal, the call ought to be divine."

(*c.*) *From an enlightened Christian conscience.* It is God's word which man undertakes to preach, and he cannot comprehend that word unless God opens it to him. To preach the preaching that God bids him, requires an inward revelation of a man's sinful and selfish nature, to enable him to give up his own word, or his own method of making men wise and holy, and to proclaim God's wisdom unto salvation. And again, as devotion to the true spirit of any work is the only way to succeed in it, how much more is this true in relation to the work of God! He who enters the ministry, as Simon Magus did, for a gift of power, does not touch the true spirit of the work, and will surely draw evil upon himself. A servant of Christ should strive to find his own work; and though all Christians are required to work for the advancement of God's kingdom and the

salvation of souls, yet all Christians are not called to the ministry.

2. *Nature of a divine call.*

If there is now no heavenly voice, nor angelic messenger sent from God, in what does this divine call essentially consist? Though external circumstances may have a pointing influence, and though there is such a thing as a call from outward events, — the "*vocatio externa*," as it was once learnedly termed, — yet we must consider that the real call is an internal one, or the "*vocatio interna*." The first is a negative call, so to speak; removing obstacles, making the way plain, and it is important in this respect; but the last is a positive call of the Holy Spirit. To express this more definitely, we would say, that, *in addition to the fact of a true conversion, and of favoring external circumstances, there should exist a supreme desire and purpose to be engaged in the special work of preaching the gospel for the salvation of souls — the peculiar work of Christ.* This should be a real, and it might be said, in some sense, a ruling motive of the mind. The idea is expressed by Vinet in other words (Pas. Theol., p. 82): "If the ruling motive of the candidate can express itself in terms which define the institution of the evangelical ministry, it is a good one." He probably means by this, that if a man thoroughly believes the truth of the necessity of Christ's work of redeeming men; that through faith in the Son of God, men are to be converted and saved; if this truth possesses him, fills his being, awakes in him a ruling motive, an irrepressible desire to become an instrument, under Christ, in bringing about this blessed reconciliation between God and man, that God should beseech man by him to become reconciled to God, — then this is a good and holy motive, one inspired by the Holy Spirit, and one that constitutes the essence of a true call to the ministry.

A writer in the Congregational Quarterly adds to this idea the practical one, that a candidate for the ministry

should feel willing to devote his life to this work — not a portion of it, but the whole of it. His words are, "The internal call, or the call of the Spirit, is an impression on a person's mind which he feels to come from God himself, through the circumstances of his life, or the emotions of his soul, telling him that he ought to engage in the labors of the ministry as his life-work."[1]

This is taking higher ground than is assumed by persons who look upon a call to the ministry as consisting in nothing more than this — that there is nothing to hinder one from being a minister. This is good as far as it goes, but it has no positive element or real call in it. In the case of some candidates for the ministry, the answer given to the question, "What is your reason for thinking you are called to the ministry?" or, "What is your purpose in being called to the ministry?" frequently is this — that he enters the ministry "because, on the whole, he thinks he can do the most good in this field." This does not seem quite satisfactory; for the ministry must be entered with the whole heart, or it will be a weary, unprofitable service. Doubtless there are many men who are pursuing other professions who ought to be in the ministry; but for one entering the ministry to be in a mental condition that merely reasons upon and balances probabilities as to future usefulness, this does not, we think, constitute precisely the right condition of mind in which to take up such a work. What this positive call to the ministry consists in may be a more difficult question to decide; but it would seem to be something more marked and profound than this intellectual choice. It is something more than a simple decision of the understanding. There is in it a decided current of the will. There is in it, in some sense, an internal voice of God to the soul, saying, "*Go thou and preach the kingdom of God!*"

This awakened desire of the soul should take the form of a ruling motive, which seeks to bend all things to the accom-

[1] October, 1864.

plishment of its end. Of course there may not be the same strength of zeal and depth of spiritual feeling in all men. Some temperaments are moved by the sense of duty more than by the affections of the heart. Faith differs, too, in its standards of consecration. All true and good ministers of the gospel could not perhaps say with the apostle, "*Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel.*" It would probably be asking too much to bring the decision of this question, in ordinary cases, to the issue of the apostle's view of the work of the ministry as here expressed; yet should not something of the feeling expressed in those words truly enter into the decision of every genuine minister of the gospel in taking up and carrying on this work? Should he not in some measure be conscious of the fact that he has really been sent to preach the gospel, and "to serve God with his spirit in the gospel of his Son"? We ourselves, indeed, may have erred — that is possible; we may have erred in our calling, and conceived ourselves to be what we are not; but that does not alter the question, nor change the conditions of a true call. In Bishop Burnet's language, "there is something in the heart of the true minister which convinces him that he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost;" that he is not acting simply upon a human resolution, or ordinary outward idea of duty.

Our Lord had this overpowering desire, or ruling motive, in his ministry. He sought not self-glory, but devoted himself, soul and body, to the work specially committed to him. It was his meat and drink to do this work; and the zeal of the Lord's house consumed him. A father of the church says, "He who is called to instruct souls is called of God, and not by his own ambition; and what is this call but an inward incentive of love, soliciting us to be zealous for the salvation of our brethren? So often as he who is engaged in preaching the word shall feel his inward man to be excited with divine affections, so often let him

assure himself that God is there, and that he is invited by him to seek the good of souls."

The essence, then, of this ruling desire of which we have spoken, is, we think, *such a strength of love for God and man, given by the Holy Spirit, that a man is willing to devote his life freely to working for the good of souls.*

Bishop Burnet says, in regard to the sincerity of this inward principle, "Ask yourselves often, could you follow that course of life if there were no settled establishment belonging to it, and if you were to preach under the cross, and in danger of persecution? For till you arrive at that, you are still carnal, and come to the priesthood for a piece of bread."

Yet we would not wish to describe the nature of this inward call in such a way as to discourage any true candidate for the ministry, for it is a serious matter to make an error here, one way or the other; and often men, young men, are not in the habit of analyzing their motives carefully. We wish only to bring out the simple truth that there *is* a divine call to the ministry, and that this is not a matter simply of human reason or suggestion, but that that true call consists chiefly in the purpose or desire to enter into *this* work above all others, as the work which God has appointed one to do. This pure desire or motive separates itself, (1.) From merely *prudential* motives. To enter the ministry simply in order to gain a living — as a "*brod-studium*" — from that the Christian conscience shrinks with disgust. It shrinks also from the motive, that in the ministry one may gain a smooth and easy pathway through life. One of the main reasons of the vitality of the American church above that of European churches (this was Neander's opinion) lies in the fact, that Americans, as a general rule, enter the ministry from spiritual, and not material, motives; not looking upon the ministry as a purely official position. We do not say that a candidate for the ministry can keep out of his mind all prudential considera-

tions, or should do so; but if these are uppermost, or come most frequently to his mind, let him, ere it be too late, give up a profession which demands a true man, and not a hireling. (2.) From motives of selfish *ambition*. This we need not dwell upon; for in deciding the question of the ministry, motives of personal ambition are to be put aside as suggestions of evil. (3.) From motives of *respect to the opinions of parents or friends*. The wishes of sincere friends should have their proper weight, but a man must decide such a question for himself *foro conscientiæ*. It is a matter between him and God: if God calls, he must obey; and if God does not call, he must not go. A parent's rash vow cannot bind the conscience of the child in this matter; the child should act without constraint.

But this strong and controlling motive or desire to enter the ministry — this supreme love to God and man — is not an unreasoning or impracticable motive. It is not a passionate enthusiasm. It springs from principle, and should be accompanied by those internal and external proofs of the intent of Providence which render it not only possible to be carried out, but which point in some measure directly to the necessity of its being carried out. This brings us to the consideration of

3. *Signs of a divine call.*

When this ruling desire or purpose to serve God in the work of the ministry is accompanied by other proofs, or by outward providential circumstances' favoring it, the fact of the calling would seem to be in some degree confirmed; and not to regard these at all, but simply to regard our own impulse or desire, may lead to a rash rather than wise decision of this momentous question.

(*a.*) A *drawing of the sympathies* freely thereto.

One finds that his inclination, as well as his positive judg-

ment on the score of duty, leads toward the ministry. Something may happen to prove to one that his sympathies with Christ in his work are all-powerful; something may show him that his heart is there, and not in worldly business. The temptation of worldly success in some form may have been already offered him, and he has clearly perceived its powerlessness over his heart: this is a great help and confirmation in his choice. But there are other less vague and more determinable signs.

(*b.*) General *fitness*, *physical*, *intellectual*, and *moral*, for the work. God would hardly call a man to the ministry who was not in any respect fitted for it. Accompanying the desire, or ruling motive, there should be a consciousness, however humble, of some degree of fitness for the work, — that there is at least no decided disqualification, e. g., no decided *physical* disability. It is a man's work, and requires an ordinary degree of physical health. "*I call upon you, young men, because you are strong.*" If a man's lungs are too weak to permit him to sustain the labor of preaching, God counsels him by this not to attempt it. A young man may indeed say, "I should probably live longer in some other occupation, but I can do more good in the ministry in a shorter time." This, we think, is false reasoning. Life may never be preferred to duty; but no true servant of God is to presume that he can do more good in one field in a short time than he can in another in a long, or longer time. A decided impediment in his speech, or anything which renders one incapable of attending to some important position of the varied duties of the ministry, would be a sufficient bar to the ministry — for other doors of service are still left open. In like manner there should be no decided *intellectual* unfitness for the work. Some men are mentally disqualified for the ministry, who may yet be men of decided ability. There is no want, but rather there is inaptness of mind. They may be persons of a too reticent, subjective, and philosophic cast of

mind, who can be only philosophers and scholars; who are not too intellectual, but too exclusively intellectual, men; who are supremely interested in the intellectual side of truth. On the other hand, they may be persons of too intensely practical minds, far better adapted for lawyers, business men, civil engineers, or scientific men. Such minds can doubtless be more useful out of the ministry than in it. Such men by their practical abilities, and their power of acquiring wealth, may become the almoners and benefactors of the church, the stewards of her treasures, creating the means and giving the impulse, in all great measures of benevolence. We would not say that great or uncommon talents are indispensable for the ministry; on the contrary, ordinary and moderate abilities, if thoroughly consecrated to the work, have accomplished wonderful things in this field; but we do contend that there should be some degree of mental adaptation for the office — some aptitude for preaching, for public address, and for other peculiar offices of the profession.

So, too, there should be no peculiar unfitness in point of natural disposition and *moral* qualifications. Some men have too much of the wild olive tree, or wild and sour crab-apple tree, in their natural temper, to grow inside of the Lord's garden, to say nothing of being planted in the ministry, where cheerfulness, hopefulness, and kindness of disposition are so important. When the heart's oil is dried up, one had better do anything than jangle and creak through the ministry of divine love all his life. Some men also are constitutionally too weak in will to push on this great and arduous work. Such inherited or inherent infirmities, and such marked faults of spirit, disqualify men to lead and guide others. It may happen also that the injurious effects of a previous life of sin shall render a good man better fitted for some other position than that of the ministry; to be "*of good reputation with those who are without*" is given by the apostle as a ministerial requi-

site. Power is taken into the ministry from a previously moral life, even from the days of childhood. Savonarola was wont to say, that "he who grew up from a child pure and irreproachable, when he became a man would be able to hold converse with angels." When the moral reputation of a man has been signally and publicly damaged, for him to take a less prominent post than the ministry is the dictate of a right sense and conscience. (Tit. 1 : 7.) There may be, and have been, however, marked exceptions to this. Added to these physical and moral disqualifications, there may be others of a more *spiritual* nature, such as doubts in religious things, which perhaps amount to the positive obscuration of faith. Every thinking mind will at some time be troubled with doubts, and they will tenaciously cling to some persons to the end of life; for Bishop Colenso is not the first man who has found difficulties in the Scriptures, nor are Blanco White and Sterling the only minds that have lost their way in the realms of spirit. Men who are among the humblest and best Christians frequently doubt their own faith and salvation. Ministers sometimes increase their theological doubts by their increase of scientific knowledge and their wider range of thought and investigation. The head is often in mists, while the heart is still moving on in the right direction.

Now, there may be troubles and doubts in the mind of a minister respecting the things of faith, which come and go like clouds over a sky, and they may not unfit him for his work, for the sun of faith still shines steadily; but there may be such an *eclipse* of faith as to disqualify a man to preach the truth; or, worse than that, there may be a decided want of positive faith, — not a hiding, but an absence, of faith. And, if a man, through some idiosyncrasy, or sincere doubt, or real disbelief, cannot embrace with such clearness the fundamental truths of Christianity as to be able to teach others with personal conviction of the same, and some degree of positive earnestness, though God may love him and lead

him along through and by his very doubts to higher points of faith, he had better not think of the ministry, until, at least, he obtains those clearer views; for in Christianity there is no esoteric and exoteric faith, or hidden truth for one class of minds, which others may not share if they will seek for it.

(*c.*) *Providential events and circumstances* which seem more or less distinctly to point to the ministry.

The mind of the Spirit is to be interpreted by outward providences as well as by inward impulses; and if the hairs of our head are numbered, and not a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father, God guides the outward as well as the inward life of a man, and adapts the one to the other; we should therefore endeavor to interpret the Spirit of God by the providence of God. These providential guidings and leadings are of too varied and personal a nature to be definitely specified. Doors of opportunity unexpectedly opened for acquiring an education; marked events or bereavements at decisive junctures of life, which lead the soul to profound views of duty; circumstances of peculiar grace in one's own history; unmistakable adaptations to the work shown in collateral and subordinate fields, such as mission work and Sunday school teaching; deliverances from outward and inward perils; the hedging up of one's way, so that a voice seems to be heard, saying, "This is the way: walk therein;" such pointing and controlling combinations of circumstances outside of one's own immediate control, and coming from a higher source, — these certainly should have weight. And even the negative fact that there are no circumstances that form an insuperable bar to one's becoming a minister should, with other things, be interpreted favorably. Ministers sometimes speak of events in their personal history which formed the turning-points of their resolution to become pastors. The case of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, born A. D. 340, is an illustrious example. The peculiar circumstances which surrounded and drew him,

as with a net, into the ministry, are striking. He was descended from a pious ancestry. In an empire which was yet but partially Christianized, his family had embraced the Christian faith, a century or more before. One of his ancestors had suffered martyrdom for the faith during the persecution of Diocletian; he had martyr's blood in his veins. His sister, in whose charge he was left, was renowned for her piety. His father, being a man of the highest civil dignity, one of the three prefects of the Roman empire, intended him to occupy a civil post. Probably another course of life was no more thought of for him, than it would have been for the son of the emperor. He was appointed prætor of the provinces of Liguria and Æmilia, of which Milan was the capital. Just before he came to his post, — which is another providential circumstance, — Auxentius, the Arian bishop of Milan, died, and on account of the excited state of religious controversy and party strife in the diocese, there could be no election. At one of the meetings, the popular feeling was so violent, that there was likelihood of a riot in the church itself. Ambrose, as the civil governor, came in to restore order. A child's voice was heard, crying out, "Ambrose, bishop!" The people, with that instinct which sometimes makes the *vox populi* the *vox Dei*, took up the cry, and Ambrose was immediately chosen bishop of Milan. He strove to evade the call by every means possible; but the people, who already knew him better than he knew himself, and had seen in him great qualities, insisted upon his acceptance. The pressure of these events at last overcame his scruples; and, as the historian Böhringer says, he always regarded his call, in his inmost heart, as one from God. The eminent qualifications of the man for the place soon were manifest. The true minister of Christ was in him. He gave away his immense estate for benevolent purposes, and devoted himself to his work with apostolic zeal and singleness of object. He was an eloquent and unwearied preacher of the word; he numbered Augustine among his converts. He

checked the Arian heresy, opposed the last desperate assaults of classic paganism, and resisted the whole force of the imperial power in vindication of the purity of Christian communion.

There may be sometimes too much made of what are called providential circumstances, so much so as to lead one into superstition. Every man loves to think that there is something peculiar in his own history, and that in some way he is a favorite of God; but, nevertheless, the directing finger of God in the events of one's own personal history is to be reverently studied and heeded, for of the good man, at least, God says, "*I will guide him by mine eye.*"

(*d.*) *A call to preach from the church.* This is also indirectly a call of God, who rules the affairs of his church, and especially in so important a matter as the appointment of a spiritual guide of his people. There is order in God's house, and he has so ordered that a minister derives his authority and commision to preach from himself through his church. The external call which comes from the church repeats, or rather gives expression to, the internal call of God. We have great faith in the true call of the church. Sometimes, no doubt, it is not a true call, when made rashly, or passionately, or selfishly; but when it has been made with prayer and humble dependence on God's will and guiding spirit, it is generally right. The history of the church proves this. True ministers are generally placed in positions best fitted for them, not only for their own growth, but for the highest good of others. God shapes good men for their places, and their places for them, and sometimes out of the most unpromising materials he brings the most glorious results.

We add a single word here upon the *Congregational idea of a church call.* Isaac Chauncey says, that "a mediate call is that which Christ makes by the instrumentality of a church. The consummation of the call is made by the free acceptance of the person called." (Cong. Dic., p. 47.)

Owen sums up the whole matter of a call in these comprehensive words: "Minister's calling arises from Christ's institution of the office, from God's providential designation of the person, and from the church's call, election, or appointment, and his acceptation."

The writer in the Congregational Quarterly (October 1864), to whom we have before referred, has some well-considered, and we think, in the main, just views upon the church's call to the ministry, or, at least, the true Congregational view of it. He holds that one may be a preacher of the gospel, and yet not be a true minister, or pastor; and old Congregational authorities unite in saying, that "good men may preach the gospel without pastoral power." This writer lays down the principle that, to become a minister, one must be regularly called, approved, ordained, and settled, by the church, over some particular pastoral field. Merely to enter the work as a preacher, going from place to place, and not remaining to nourish the life that may have been awakened; or merely to give himself to the work on Sunday, and to spend the rest of the week in secular business; being engaged in preaching as a by-work, and not as a life-work, or regular calling,— such a one is not entitled to the name and office of minister.[1] He may be a good man, a good preacher, a faithful laborer for Christ; but he is not, according to Congregational views, a regular minister of the gospel. "When one has an impression, from the emotions of his soul, and the circumstances of his life, that God has called him to the work of the ministry; when his Christian brethren, after a sufficient and prayerful examination, have felt that he has all the needed natural, literary, theological, and spiritual qualifications for that work; when he has been freely chosen by a particular church to perform that work among them, or to go to the regions beyond, and

[1] We suppose no reference is here made to Methodist ministers who gain their livelihood by secular occupations, and who are efficient and noble workers for Christ.

labor among the destitute; when he has received the imposition of hands from those who have the proper authority to perform that act, — then it may be considered that he has received a proper, regular, and sufficient induction into the Christian ministry."

The more the number of good and faithful ministers of the gospel is increased, the better; but the standard of induction into the ministry should not be lowered. There is a tendency to do this, and there is an indecent haste often to enter the ministry, and an unpardonable irregularity in the mode of entering it. This all tends to degrade the sacredness, and lessen the usefulness, of the pastoral office.

§ 31. *Ordination.*

Ordination may be defined to be *a solemn induction into the pastoral office of one who is regularly called and chosen by a church to be its pastor.*

It is a scriptural ceremony, having a sacred impressiveness and significance, like a marriage ceremony, and not to be frequently repeated, but done once for all; for it has reference to a permanent office and work, to which the subject has devoted his life.

The ceremonial act itself of ordination, or of "the laying on of hands," is one that is symbolical of the communication of the Holy Spirit, given for a particular work, in answer to prayer, as in Acts 6 : 6 and 14 : 23, and in like manner, though not here applied to the presbyteral or ministerial office, in Acts 19 : 6.

The symbol is derived from the Old Testament, as in Numbers 27 : 18, 20, Deut. 34 : 9, and Gen. 48 : 14, where it probably signified a kind of benediction, or the drawing down of God's blessing on the person and his work.

Neander says, "The consecration to offices was conducted in the following manner: After those persons to whom the performance belonged had laid their hands on the head of

the candidate (a symbolic action borrowed from the Hebrew סְמִיכָה), they besought the Lord that he would grant what this symbol denoted — the impartation of the gifts of his Spirit for carrying on the office thus undertaken in his name. If, as it was presumed, the whole ceremony corresponded to its intent, and the requisite disposition existed in those for whom it was performed, there was reason for considering the communication of the spiritual gifts necessary for the office, as connected with the consecration performed in the name of Christ. And since Paul, from this point of view, designated the whole of the solemn proceeding (without separating it into its various elements) by that which was its external symbol (as, in scriptural phraseology, a single act of a transaction consisting of several parts, and sometimes that which was most striking to the senses, is often mentioned for the whole), he required of Timothy that he should seek to revive afresh the spiritual gifts that he had received by the *laying on of hands*."[1]

The Congregational idea of ordination has its essence, not in the laying on of the hands of ministers or bishops, and, through this, of imparting to the subject an apostolic power or supernatural influence; but in the actual choice or appointment, by the people, of the minister to his office, while the ordination service is the formal induction into office.

In the Cambridge Platform (p. 66), it is said, "This ordination we account as nothing else but the solemn putting a man into his place and office in the church, to which he had a right before by his election."

Hooker, in the preface to his Survey, says, "Ordination is installing of an officer into the office to which he was previously called."

Cambridge Platform, c. 9, sec. 2: "The essence and substance of the outward call of an ordinary officer doth not

[1] "Planting and Training," cap. v., p. 97.

consist in his ordination, but in his voluntary and free election by the church, and his accepting of that relation. Ordination doth not constitute an officer, nor give him the essentials of his office. The apostles were elders without imposition of the hands of men. Paul and Barnabas were officers before that imposition of hands."

The old Puritan authorities deny, also, that even a council is necessary for the act of ordination. Richard Mather and John Cotton say, that though it was the practice to call in the aid of other churches, yet that the power of ordination was in the church alone.

Ordination, therefore, in the Congregational view of it, is not an *opus operatum*, or something conferring mysterious power by the actual imposition of hands; but it is, nevertheless, considered to be an apostolical and not unimportant rite. It may not be absolutely essential, but it is necessary to good order in the church and in the ministry; and its modern neglect is a cause of great evil, lessening the dignity, efficiency, and permanency of the ministry. Ordination is usually performed by means of an ecclesiastical council; but, as has been already stated, it would be valid if done by the church without a council, though it would not be regular. True Congregationalism is not bare independency, and each church, though "an original power may inhere in it to ordain a minister over itself," yet has no right to ordain an entirely unfit or unworthy man, one totally opposed to the scriptural idea of the ministry, or to the common *consensus* in regard to the office among the churches. Christ is higher than the church, and the minister, though placed in office by the church, is primarily called and delegated by Christ, and derives his authority from him. He is first called of God, and then he is called of the church. The church cannot make a minister of the gospel, Christ alone can do it.

There are many vexed questions in regard to the true nature of ordination, its temporary or indelible character,

its relations to the standing of the ministry outside of the local pastorate, the distinction between ordination and installation, and the real measure of power which ordination confers; which questions we are not called upon to discuss; but, while we respect the views of experienced men who differ from us, we are inclined to the opinion, that the circumstances of the age and the time, guided by a Christian instinct, must, to some extent, rule in this matter (which is of great, though not of vital, importance), and that to press an ancient Congregational usage — good in its time —rigidly is not wise; thus, to require, in every instance, that the ordination should be in connection with a local church as a definite field of settlement, cannot be carried out with logical strictness; nor can it be held that a connection with a local church is the absolute prerequisite of good ministerial standing.

It is greatly to be regretted that this ancient ceremony of ordination, which has in itself often so much of spiritual impressiveness and quickening, which is so beautiful and solemn, should seem to be losing its power and place in the church, and that a kind of commercial and every-day idea is attached to the relation of a minister to his people. In primitive New England country communities it still, happily, retains its sacred import and hallowed associations. We quote words that express a true sentiment, though applied to a different land and people: "I agree with you certainly, that every sacred solemnity has in it something impressive, provided it be well performed and reverently attended to; but yet, if you would see a real ordination, go to some out-of-the-way village that is with a hearty interest receiving a well-intentioned young man, who, on his side, is consecrating to it his first strength, with tears and prayers: that is a virgin marriage!"[1]

John Wesley denied the necessity, but not the expediency,

[1] Manse of Mastland.

of ordination; and he himself at Bristol, England, ordained a minister to the new American Methodist churches. He also established certain tests to be applied to lay preachers, and many of these early Methodist lay preachers became afterward regularly ordained ministers. In like manner, Congregationalists hold that ordination, while it is not necessary to constitute a minister of the gospel, is, nevertheless, expedient and orderly, and its omission, except in cases of real necessity, would go to destroy the feeling of responsibility in church and pastor, and would be injurious to the church's permanent prosperity.

In regard to lay-preaching, it is undoubtedly true, as has been stated, that lay-preaching was practised extensively in the earliest age of the church. In the apostolic church itself, lay-preaching, or exhortation, was practised under the supervision and regulation of the presbyter of the church; and at the present day it is not only lawful, but greatly demanded, where there are fit men to do it, and where the laborers are few. A spiritual earnestness, a freshness, and a practical application to the wants of the people, are often found in lay-preaching, which do not always appear in the routine of regular preaching; but this does not conflict with the permanent institution and work of the regular ministry.

§ 32. *The Trials and Rewards of the Pastor.*

It is impossible that one who has not yet entered upon the work of a pastor should know (and it would not be well for him to know) all the difficulties that attend a faithful pastorate; but it is right that he should have beforehand some general idea of what they are or may be; else, like a ship unfitted for rough weather, he is apt to be discouraged and thrown back at the outset, by the first storm he encounters.

The Scriptures hang out premonitory lights here, as in 2 Tim. 4 : 5; 2 Tim. 2 : 3, John 15 : 20; John 16 : 33.

Erasmus wrote, *Evangelium Christi sincere prædicantibus nunquam deest crux.*" Vinet (Pas. Theol., p. 54) says of the pastor, "His life is a life of consecration, without which it has no meaning. His career is a perpetual sacrifice, which includes all that belongs to him."

The young pastor, with a courageous and trustful heart, feeling the greatness of his vocation, and at the same time the greatness of the arm he leans upon, should prepare himself for trials; and what great and worthy work does not have its trials?

Let us, then, endeavor (and we shall be brief) to consider some of the *trials* and *temptations* which are almost inevitable to him who is called upon "*to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*" Among those of a more outward nature might be mentioned, —

(*a.*) *The opposition of the world and of worldly men to the truth.* The outward world presses in every way hardly upon a devoted teacher of the inner, spiritual truth.

All men need the truth, and know that they need it; yet when the truth is faithfully brought home to their consciences, it encounters a strong opposition; and in order to meet this forcible resistance of the natural heart, the minister of Christ has but the weapons of truth, of reason, of God's word. He is soon stripped of confidence in human strength in this contest with the powerful forces of human will. Constantly to manifest the truth to men's hearts and consciences, whatever their opposition may be, and whatever the varied and combined antagonism to the truth of the world may be, requires one to be braced up by God's own hand for the strife, otherwise he will soon faint.

(*b.*) *The liability to be misinterpreted in his words, acts, and motives.* This was true in the apostles' time in regard to Christian teachers.

The pastor's only care should be to please God; for

motives cannot be perfectly apprehended by men; and even his acts are but points or fragments of his character, sometimes the best and sometimes the worst.

A minister must be faithful both to God and to man, although his faithfulness may be accounted narrowness, his zeal illiberality, and his acts of love acts of selfishness.

A minister should cultivate a large-hearted and loving patience, which is like a sea, into which all the misapprehensions, and even enmities, of men, shall immediately sink and be forgotten.

(*c.*) *His best-directed efforts to do good are sometimes apparently without fruit.* The pain and disappointment endured by a young minister connected with his preaching alone are often great. He may make a laborious preparation; he may pray over his sermon; he may have the strongest hopes that his preaching will be successful; but though strong and assured of success before he goes into the pulpit, his sermon falls lifeless. His imagination dwells upon his failure. He thinks it is clearly not his vocation to preach; he had better be anywhere than in the pulpit. Brainerd thus says of himself when he was a young preacher: "In the evening of the Sabbath I could hardly look anybody in the face, because of the imperfections I saw in my performances in the day past." God may permit a young minister to toil on for years without giving him the outward evidences of success. Other churches around may be visited with the signs of renewed life, and his own may remain like a barren rock in a meadow. We merely point out this peculiar kind of trial; and it is a great one to some ministers, although others are led through pleasanter and easier paths.

(*d.*) *The death of the impenitent of his congregation.*

No one can prejudge, in any case, the eternal judgment of the righteous and loving God, nor should we desire to do so; but it may be that some will be taken out of life without showing the slightest evidence of repentance or of

the new life of God in their souls. A minister cannot but solemnly ask himself in such cases, "Would it have been different had I been personally more faithful to such souls?"

(*e.*) *The apathy and lifelessness of the church.*

One may be called to a church whose spiritual life has seemingly almost run out; even as some of our older New England churches apparently live on their past usefulness, and are orthodoxly dead. Now, if a young minister attempts to bear the burden of a dead church, it will certainly crush him; and until he learns "a more excellent way," he is in danger of sinking under his efforts to revive that which God only can restore.

(*f.*) *Extraordinary trials and persecutions.*

The normal state of the Christian church in the world is not a peaceful one, and the times of trouble and persecution may at any moment arise. It may be for the salvation of the church that persecutions and afflictions shall fall upon it, as they did upon the Reformed churches of France in a time of supposed tranquillity and peace. With the exception of the recent troublous times of war, which, for a while at least, had a purifying and elevating influence upon the church, we have always lived in such peaceful and prosperous days, that we think this to be the regular condition of things; but a change may come in this world of wickedness as suddenly as a storm rises; and pastor and people may be thrown into great trials, perils, and tribulations. It is for the pastor to be prepared for this, and he must not be a hireling, to flee before the danger. He should possess something of the martyr-spirit — that of Rogers, Hooper, Latimer, and the old French Reformed pastors, who were ready to suffer for and with their flocks. Vinet says, "For a moment God may leave us in an easy position, but the ministry *implies* the most dangerous situations; it is always a complete sacrifice of body and soul to the service of the church." To this list of outward trials might be added the more common-

place but often severe one of small salary and pecuniary difficulties, which are not infrequently the occasion of untold anxiety and suffering to able and worthy pastors. If the churches do not cultivate a higher-toned conscience in this respect, a much lower class of ministers, intellectually and morally, will be brought into the pulpits of the land, and the cause of true religion will greatly suffer.

(*g.*) *Insensibility in one's own heart, arising from familiarity with the most solemn truths.*

This is a trial of a more inward nature than any we have mentioned. It was a theory of Bishop Butler, that passive impressions, by being often repeated, tend to grow weaker, while active impressions, as well as active habits, are strengthened by exercise; just as the perception of distress or misery is blunted by its frequent occurrence, while practical benevolence is increased by its true practice. The passive dwelling or theorizing upon virtue, and even upon the highest spiritual truth, and writing fine things about it, tend in the same manner to form a habit of insensibility to moral considerations, while the actual practice of virtue and faith strengthens their power. It is needless to dwell upon the injurious effects of this moral and spiritual insensibility, which, if suffered to go on, engenders insincerity and hypocrisy, and is like the night-frost to all tender and true religious life. Its cure lies in habits of practical piety, and of cheerful, vigorous personal activity outside of the pulpit.

(*h.*) *A temptation to exalt the intellectual and literary above the spiritual portion of his work.*

A young minister is inclined to do this, on the principle that the better reputation he has as a preacher and thinker, the more good he can accomplish. But where a minister feels that his study is gaining upon him, and that his more practical pastoral duties are growing distasteful, he should look to his heart, and question himself. A minister does not learn at first to be satisfied with a simple sermon; but he is

haunted by the demon of an intellectual reputation, or he is interested in some important train of thought, and how can he break off to visit a poor family, and listen to their querulous talk? He yields to the temptation and stays at home, and this leads to the habit of staying at home; but he will find, at length, that by yielding to this temptation, though his sermons may grow more brilliant, they will have less unction and power, and the hearts of his people will be gradually slipping from him, so that he will grasp a barren sceptre, or be obliged to resign it altogether.

(*i.*) *The temptation to the opposite of intellectual toil — to ease and self-indulgence.*

A man of ability may find that the intellectual calls of his profession can be met by a moderate quantity of hard work, and he may imperceptibly lower his standard; he fails to turn his whole energies into the current of his work; he becomes a dabbler in literature; he indulges in too much periodical and light reading; he grows to be a social lounger; he neglects his study, or frequents his easy-chair in it; he loses the spirit of self-denial, and makes his work too easy; and yet, intellectually speaking, he may be a better preacher than half his brethren, and thus he excuses himself. How fatal is this temptation in a profession which, from its tranquil, domestic, and social character, is apt to lead to indolence, unless a manly spirit of self-sacrifice is kept up!

(*j.*) *The temptation to feed upon applause.*

A man who always has hearers when he speaks, and who speaks with authority from his position, is tempted to display himself; and if he is not truly great as Christ makes a man, he will give way to the desire of winning human admiration, and thus of preaching *himself*, and not Christ Jesus the Lord. Praise is a healthy and needful stimulant to generous natures; but if its love is cherished, it is fatal to ministerial character and power; and for this reason, perhaps it is best at first to be a stammerer, and to call

forth no praise, until the mind gets strong enough and spiritually noble enough to bear it; for God may sometimes keep back young ministers from great outward success, since he would not have them think of themselves, but of their work. He knows that man loves power; as an Arabian proverb says, "There is a bud of the love of power in every man's bosom; it waits but the fit opportunity to expand;" and this opportunity comes when a minister is firmly seated upon his ministerial throne, and established there as it were by divine sanction; he is not contradicted, at least to his knowledge; he sees himself to be the centre of interest, of opinion, of influence, to a considerable number of minds, and it is but human to grasp these advantages and to cultivate them. The love of praise thus grows into the love of power. But ministers who nourish the love of power for its own sake soon lose the love of souls, and they also lose the ability to win souls; for they lose that simplicity of spirit which is the prerequisite to the gift of a higher wisdom and skill; they cultivate the spirit of political intrigue and management; they grow suspicious, as tyrants do; they become dogmatic in their tone of preaching and conversation; they drive away from them independent minds; they injure the cause of truth by their imperiousness far more than they build it up by their abilities; they work by power, not by love. Such a type of minister, although often a man of great ability, is not to be imitated, yet he may command a certain degree of respect and admiration.

(*k.*) *Peculiar spiritual conflicts* in matters of faith.

A minister engaged in the work of his profession is no longer the merely theoretic and philosophical student, but he is led to vital studies into the foundations of truth; he comes in contact with the practical difficulties of Christian faith in the human heart; he is called upon to give reasons which must not only meet the argumentative requirement, but which must satisfy the awakened and earnest moral

nature; and he is thus led to reconsider his whole spiritual experience, and painfully to travel over his field of personal faith step by step, which he swept over when receiving these things as a student. He has now to preach positive truth: he cannot weigh too much or too long; he must preach that he knows, and testify that he has seen. He is to instruct others unto eternal life, and the time has now come for him, as far as possible, to settle these things; for men like to be led, yes, even ruled, in such things, by one in whose sincerity and faith they have confidence; and there is a certain lawful and scriptural rulership in these things; but in this practical aspect of truth new difficulties spring up which never occur to the student period of life. The pastor is staggered by the operation of truth when applied to living minds; and he finds men who believe everything, and yet have little or no true Christian life, as well as others who believe little, and yet are apparently true Christian men. Even while he is called upon to review his own faith, and struggle through these new clouds of doubt and difficulty, he must *preach on;* and he cannot speak of his difficulties to those whom he is trying to lead in a plain path.

Another phase of this spiritual trial and conflict is a consciousness often of the want of a lively faith on his own part, especially in public and pulpit exercises. This coldness and dulness seem to him as bad as doubt; his mind is filled with self-reproaches; and is it not true that a preacher should not say more than he feels? that he should not go beyond his convictions? He should be true to himself, whatever happens, and he should fight his way through by prayer and striving to a higher spiritual point of view; and this is to be said, that often his difficulties will be suddenly cleared away, when he actually engages in some service of the ministry; for example, during the invocatory prayer, or in the first words of the sermon, his good heart comes to him again; and an invisi-

ble Spirit will seem to help him, and attune his spirit to the service before him. Besides, we are not always responsible for our feelings; but we are for our principles.

(*l.*) *The anxious thought that he is not doing his whole duty to souls committed to him.*

This is the greatest trial of a faithful minister, and he cannot wholly escape it. In a work which seems to require an angel's energy and watchfulness, his human imperfections appear inexcusable to him; and in times of weariness, this sense of responsibility presses terribly upon him. His only escape is in the thought that he is not responsible for souls, further than in the faithful manifestation of the truth to them, and that God will aid him to bear a burden which is confessedly too great for a human being to bear alone; he is a co-worker with God, and he is not to do God's part of the work.

But we have dwelt too long upon the "shady side" of the picture; there is a bright side, and the brightness far overpowers the darkness. F. W. Robertson, it is true, says, that the shadows predominate; but his temperament was peculiarly sensitive, — almost morbidly so, — and his faith, though noble and profound, seemed to be wanting in the element of hope; he had the principle of self-sacrifice without that of cheerful, trustful self-forgetfulness.

The *rewards* of the faithful pastor, truly doing Christ's work, are no less sure than his trials; his trials are incidental, his rewards are intrinsic and inalienable.

(*a.*) *The assurance of Christ's constant presence with him.* If his office is divinely instituted, it will be divinely sustained; and the promise of Christ to his ministers is, "*Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.*" Christ lives, and has an absolute control over the affairs of his kingdom, and a personal interest in all who love him, especially those who are doing his work; he aids them,

he gives them unseen encouragement, he frees them from their difficulties. It is an indescribable help to a minister to believe that if he is doing Christ's work, Christ is present to help him, and he may say with Paul, or Peter, or Luther, "*Our sufficiency is of God.*" He is not obliged to make new truth, but he is simply to use the old divine truth, always powerful, always sufficient: "hence," in the words of Robert Hall, "the ministers of Christ are not dependent for success on the force of moral suasion; they are not merely the teachers of an external religion, which includes truths the most momentous, but they are also the instruments through whom a supernatural agency is exerted. In the conversion of souls, we are not to compare the difficulties to be surmounted with the feeble resources of human power, but with His with whom nothing is impossible."[1]

(*b.*) *He has a ministry of life, love, peace, good will to men.*

He has a ministry of life, and he should never represent it as a ministry of death or condemnation. It is a living, not a dead Christ, that he preaches; death to sin, indeed, with the crucified Redeemer, but life to righteousness with the risen Lord. Men are responsible for their own destruction. "*But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*" The gospel has nothing to do with men's death; it belongs to an entirely different sphere of things; it is wholly a remedial system; it is directed altogether to men's good. The true minister of Christ can say to his people, "*For we are helpers of your joy:*" he is to do good, to promote happiness; and he is never tempted by his legitimate work to turn aside to any pursuit which will cause evil of any kind. "*Therefore, seeing we have this ministry*"

[1] Discouragements and Supports of the Christian Minister.

(so good, benevolent, hopeful, life-producing), "*as we have received mercy, we faint not.*"

Let the minister feel in his whole being the enthusiasm of a great cause, of a cause whose spirit is unselfish love, and whose triumph is the good and happiness of men.

(*c.*) *He dwells in communion with high, pure, and divine things.* He does not plunge daily into the defilements of worldly business, and breathe the corrupt air of the market or the stock exchange; but *his business* is to care for the interests of God; and even while he walks among men, and all kinds of men, he does not catch the infection of worldly care in which they live, but at all times, and on all days, he dwells in the gates of the Lord's house, and serves in his temple; he lives in the highest thoughts which can employ a mind, and by the nature of his work, he is brought into constant fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

(*d.*) He can regard the fruits of his labors as *enduring.* His labors are beneficial to this world and to this life in the building up of a Christian civilization; but his real work is is to build up a commonwealth that is to last as long as God endures. If he has aided souls to find peace in Christ, no power can take from him this satisfaction; it partakes of the divine blessedness. And his work is not in vain, even if apparently unsuccessful; for how many in his congregation become Christians who do not think they are such! Another minister follows him in the field of his labors, and suddenly there is a revival of religion, and many souls are brought into the kingdom of God; but this may spring from his preparative agency, more than from the new laborer's instrumentality; the seed he has long before sown, comes up in a night.

(*e.*) *He enjoys the gratitude and affection of the good.* There is nothing of any real value to us excepting the love of God and of the good. The faithful pastor is the centre of numberless affections, hopes, and prayers; he is enshrined

in the hearts of his people. He has joined the parents in holy matrimony, he has baptized the infant, he has blessed the child, he has instructed the youth; he has been the centre of many a family group in the most tender and sorrowful times; he has been with his people in storm and shine, and has fought their spiritual battles, and shared in their triumphs; and why should he not be dear to them? The true pastor never can know how much he is honored and beloved; he is possessor of wealth to which the world could add nothing.

(*f.*) He has the consciousness of *employing his powers in such a way as to bring in the fullest returns.* His mind can use its best energies to the best advantage. There is no profession in which a man, if his heart is in it, has the opportunity of exerting every faculty to better purpose, for more direct good, than in the Christian ministry. If, for example, his field is at the growing West, on the boundless prairie, or among the rugged gold-veined mountains of the central territories, he can build up the Christian state while he is building up the Christian church; and in all good works, reform movements, education, science, the cause of civil freedom, every civilizing and refining influence, to say nothing of higher results, he can do more for society and the individual man than in any other possible position; for he deals with first principles, with the formative powers of character and society, with the moral and renovating forces of human life, and thus his profession is the economy of benevolent power on earth.

(*g.*) He may look with hope *to a final blessed recompense.* He has a great reward already in possession here in his own heart; but the promises of reward to come are infinitely rich toward those who work for God, in Christ-like labors directed to the spiritual good and salvation of men.

In fine, although the pastor has his trials, in order that he may, in some sense, resemble Christ, and have fellowship with Him, in his sufferings, who was made perfect through

suffering, and was a High Priest that can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, because he was tempted like as we are, yet, taken altogether, the life of the ministry is generally a happy one. God will honor those men who honor him; and though they deserve nought at his hands, and are unprofitable servants, he abundantly rewards the sincere labors of those who strive to serve him. Ministers are happy and cheerful men — none more so; for they live in an atmosphere of goodness, noble pursuits, high studies, benevolent activities, and reasonable enjoyments. Nothing innocent is debarred from them any more than from other Christians, and they should be the promoters of the happiness as well as the faith of their people.

But, after all, neither trials nor rewards are to be much thought of: happiness is not the great thing; the minister of Christ should live upon a higher plane of motives, and should walk by faith, not by sight. He should regard it as the noblest of privileges to be allowed to follow Christ through good and evil report, and to preach him to men. He should be able to say, "*I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me; for that he counted me faithful, putting me in the ministry.*" He should have a spirit not only to discharge his duty faithfully, but a spirit of freedom and praise; he should feel that it is his meat and drink, his life, his joy, to do the will of his Master, and to finish the work he has given him to do.

PART SECOND.

THE PASTOR AS A MAN.

§ 33. *Spiritual Qualifications.*

The pastor, though he is not called upon to be a better man than any other disciple of Christ, is naturally expected to be in some sort a representative, a typical Christian;[1] for to him men come to drink as to a spring. There should, therefore, be in him an abounding spiritual life; nor should he be in the apostle's language a "*novice*" in things belonging to God. It is presumed that there can be no question on the antecedent point, that the Christian pastor should be a true "*disciple*." One may, indeed, be deceived respecting himself; but he whose business it is to convert men to Christ should himself be converted; he who is to guide believers should himself be a man of faith.

To do, indeed, all that a perfect pastor should do, he should be a perfect man, filled with the Spirit of God. Where shall such a man be found? There was never but one such man — one such pastor. The gospel is committed to imperfect men; and yet, after all, how dare we present a low or manifestly defective standard for the pastor of souls? At what point can we affirm that he has a right to fail, or to fall short of the mark?

Gregory of Nazianzen, quoted by Vinet, says, "We must first be pure, and then purify others; be taught, then

[1] 1 Tim. 4: 12.

teach others; become light, and then enlighten others; draw near to God ourselves, and then induce others to approach him; sanctify ourselves, and then make others holy." The Christian pastor should be able to say with the primitive ministers of Christ (1 Cor. 2: 12, 13), "*Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God, which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*"

In respect to spiritual qualifications, therefore, we would lay it down as an axiom, that, not only for his own welfare, but for power in his ministry, *the pastor's first religious duty is to himself and his own soul.* He is to be careful first of all, and with great solicitude, that the life of God is kept strong and pure within him. 1 Tim. 4: 16, "*Take heed to thyself and to thy doctrine, for in so doing thou shalt save thyself and those that hear thee.*" The example of Dr. Chalmers, who was brought, when at the age of thirty, to a deeper experience of the truth, if not for the first time brought into the kingdom of God by the renewing of his heart, some time after he had become a settled minister, is a familiar and most striking example of the new power that comes into a ministry, when the pastor once receives the true spirit of the gospel into his own heart.[1]

A man's power in any field of religious work is in proportion to his inward appropriation of God by faith. "Faith is the law upon whose actuating energy God has made the life which we have in him to depend; and we can no more detach what we do in our lives from what we are in our souls, than we can separate heat or light from their essential principles, or expect to enjoy either in the absence of the conditions in which their existence is involved." God, communicating himself through his Spirit, "*enabled*" the first

[1] Hanna's Life of Chalmers, vol. i., pp. 166, 268, 341, 421, 424.

ministers, — that is, endued them with power, — to do the works that they did for the triumph of the gospel. If a man, then, cuts himself off from the spring, he may have all the conduits, and the most scientific system of irrigation, but his garden will not be watered, and it will remain "a dry and thirsty ground." "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord.*" The author from whom we quoted above says, "The disciples showed that they were aware of this by that remarkable answer, when enjoined by their Master to the practice of forgiveness, 'Lord, increase our faith;' we might have expected, when a moral duty difficult to the natural man was in question, the words would have been, 'increase our charity;' but in the conviction that obedience was only practicable through a strength and virtue that did not reside in themselves, their prayer was for an increase of the faculty through which alone the divine aid can be made available by the soul." The spiritual qualifications of a minister for his work thus lie altogether in his relations to God, if they are real and living relations.

If this life of God is in the pastor's soul, and if he has been truly called to the ministry of Christ, the next thing required of him is, *to keep this divine gift, or calling, alive.* 2 Tim. 1 : 6, "*I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee;*" for this is a spiritual gift, the peculiar ministerial gift of the love of Christ's work in the conversion of souls. This first love, this youthful zeal, this flame which fell from heaven, consecrating him to the work of saving men's souls, may abate. When he meets with serious antagonisms, he may be discouraged; when he is assailed by the temptations of a worldly spirit, he may give way, and grow cold; he may think himself beyond danger, and, being busy with the spiritual affairs of others, he may forget to look within his own spirit, and to watch over his own heart. As a public man, also, he may suppose that he has no time for himself, and that it is true self-sacrifice

not to think of himself. He has also unusual spiritual burdens to bear, and the higher we go up a mountain, the heavier our burden grows, and the more difficult is every effort to sustain it. The minister thus moves in a rarer atmosphere than other men move in; a constant tension of soul is required of him; he is not permitted to descend the mountain and breathe the easier air of lower thoughts and pursuits, but he dwells on the heights; from the pulpit he goes to the lecture-room, from the lecture-room to the bedside of the sick, from the sick-bed, to the prayer-meeting, from that to his studies, and from his studies to his pulpit again; his yearly, weekly, hourly thought is, mainly, on high spiritual themes. That is in one sense a great privilege, and in another a great trial; for it is a state of mind which requires constant watching and renewal, lest there be an over-tension, lest the spirit grow dull, the fire go out, and the gift of God become dead within him.

The simple methods that we would suggest by which a minister should strive to maintain his spirituality of mind, and his spiritual gift as a minister of Christ, are threefold, viz., by *meditation*, *reading the Scriptures*, and *prayer*.

1. *Meditation.* Jeremy Taylor, speaking of religious meditation, says, "If in the definition of meditation I should call it an unaccustomed and unpractised duty, I should speak a truth, though somewhat inartificially, for not only the interior beauties and brighter excellences are as unfelt as ideas and abstractions are, but also the practice and common knowledge of the duty itself are strangers to us, like the retirements of the deep, or the undiscovered treasures of the Indian hills. And this is a very great cause of the dryness and expiration of men's devotion, because our souls are so little refreshed with the waters and holy dews of meditation. We go to our prayers by chance, or order, or by determination of accidental occurrences, and we recite them as we read a book, and sometimes we are sensible of the duty, and a flash of lightning makes the room bright,

and our prayers end, and the lightning is gone, and we are as dark as ever. We draw our water from standing pools, which never are filled but with sudden showers, and therefore we are dry so often; whereas, if we would draw water from the fountains of our Saviour, and derive them through the channel of diligent and prudent meditations, our devotions would be a continual current, and safe against the barrenness of frequent droughts. For meditation is *an attention and application of the spirit to divine things;* a searching out of all instruments to a holy life, a devout consideration of them, and a production of those affections which are in a direct order to the love of God and a pious conversation. Indeed, meditation is all that great instrument of piety whereby it is made prudent, and reasonable, and orderly, and perpetual. For, supposing our memory instructed with the knowledge of such mysteries and revelations as are apt to entertain the spirit, the understanding is first and best employed in the consideration of them, and then the will in their reception, when they are duly prepared, and so transmitted; and both these in such manner, and to such purposes, that they become the magazine and repositories of grace, and instrumental to all designs of virtue."[1]

Meditation is fixing or establishing in our minds those divine truths and principles which have a direct influence in forming a holy life. By thinking, for example, on the humility of Jesus, by making it the subject of deep meditation, by fixing this truth always in the mind, this must have an effect to produce the same humility in us. Meditation, to be profitable, must not always dwell upon the highest mysteries of religion, but chiefly upon the plainest truths and duties. Jeremy Taylor says, "High speculations are as barren as the tops of cedars; but the fundamentals of Christianity are fruitful as the valleys or the creeping vine."

[1] Jeremy Taylor's Works, Bohn's ed., vol. i. p. 66.

The understanding and imagination are to be held in restraint in meditation — not suffered to wander from one thing to another, and to indulge in dreamy musings, or even in visions of heavenly things that have no practical bearing on a good life; but though religious meditation may sometimes rise to holy contemplation of heavenly mysteries, yet it is for the purpose of aiding piety, and the daily Christian life, and therefore the fruits of meditation, or the results and decisions of meditation, should be carried into practice, else they are unprofitable.

Monasticism was the distortion of this duty; for it recognized the need of intervals of seclusion from earthly objects, and of communion with one's self and with God; since, with a physical and sensitive nature, to which the outward world appeals, one must withdraw into comparative solitude, in order to be thus entirely with one's self; but the monkish conception failed to unite the idea of occasional solitude with the noble Christian truth of a common human life in this world: it was not practical; it made solitude an end, and not a means; it was a partial and untrue system of education in holy living. Christ gave us an example, when, from the scenes of a life filled with good activity, he went to meditate alone on the mountain, or in the desert; and how much more do his imperfect servants, especially his ministers, whose little spiritual life soon runs out, need to have it replenished from silent communion with the unseen springs of life!

To be always in society, and in the full sight and hearing of the world, as some ministers seem to be, makes the mind superficial, and such a man cannot have profound thoughts.

To be alone with God, and to lie, as it were, in the shadow of his presence, bring a salutary awe; the soul's vanity, pride, selfishness, dwindle, and the nature is deepened, purified, strengthened.

Thoughts on spiritual truth, with which one feeds the minds and faith of hundreds, cannot be conceived in a

crowd, but only in that contemplative solitude, into which the soul, as did Christ in his solitude, carries the warm sympathies and real wants of men. A minister accomplishes more who mingles thought with action, and blends meditation with toil. As his convictions are deepened, as his purpose is more centralized; so, when he throws himself into actual duties and labors, he has an aim, a tenacity, a force, which bear him beyond the possible reach of other less intense and less concentrated minds.

The time of preparation for the work of the ministry is in some, though not all, respects such a period of meditative retirement; and such a period of silent study and preparation is not lost time. Christ waited thirty years in seclusion before he began to preach the gospel. The seasons also of vacation, to a settled pastor, may be, to some extent, spent in this way, not only for the renovation of the bodily, but of the spiritual powers. Let him go into the country, or the woods, or the wilderness, and be alone with God. He will come up, like John the Baptist out of the wilderness, to move the city. But a minister should have frequent periods of complete retirement; and he should be willing to let the literary and scientific part of his profession suffer rather than to lose that power which comes from a strong and healthy state of the religious affections; for, at the present day, when there is so much of energetic working for Christ, the fear is, that the type of piety may sometimes have more activity than depth.

Meditation, we have seen, is not prayer, nor devotion, strictly so called, although it is a highly devotional exercise. Vinet says its etymology explains its practice, i. e., "it is getting into the *middle* of things;" it is searching, not in a speculative, but practical spirit, for the great principles of divine truth which have unchangeable relations to the soul; and it is also the patient exploring of our own hearts to find out their spiritual wants. It is striving to

discover, with God's help, what are the sources of our weakness and ill-success; and, in the humble tranquillity of the mind to meet God, to question him, to gain from him new thoughts of truth, and new desires of love and obedience.

Religious meditation thus chiefly concerns itself with two classes of themes — divine truth and personal experience.

"Our meditation of God," Fénelon says, "should be guided by love;" and he uses the illustration of the thinking of a child about an absent parent, the child being led thereto by his pure love of the dear object.

One may stimulate his meditation upon divine truth by reading quickening books, especially the lives of Christians of marked power and faith, such as Wayland's *Life of Judson*, Stanley's *Life of Arnold*, the *Life of Frederick Perthes*, Augustine's *Confessions*, Neander's *Life of Chrysostom*, and such works also as Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, the *Theologia Germanica*, Jeremy Taylor's *Life of Jesus Christ*, William Law's *Serious Call to a Holy Life*, Leighton's *Works*, Professor Upham's *Interior Life*, and his other writings — books which, though they have a vein of mysticism in them, have substance of thought, and are truly spiritual books.

Meditation upon personal experience, or self-examination, is thought less of at present than formerly, and it has been said that Christ did not teach it. It has undoubtedly been carried to a false extreme, so that it became an unnatural and injurious self-inquisition; and now there is come the reaction. But this duty is, when simply and rightly viewed, one taught both by conscience and Scripture. A Christian minister should surely at times thoughtfully ask himself, "Is the plan of my life a true one? Am I following it with true motives? Do I see in myself the beginnings of selfishness, or of a worldly spirit, or of ministerial jealousy, ambition, and cupidity? Am I governed by a desire to do good to men, and to build up the pure cause of righteousness, or

by some lower desire? And *what* am I preaching? the truth of the Son of God, the truth of the cross, or my own philosophy?

Then there are frequently cases in a parish of a difficult nature, of peculiar religious experience, or of obstinate resistance to the light, which require special thought; and there is always the great question to be revolved, How is Christian truth, how is the love of God, to be brought home to the hearts of young and old, rich and poor, educated and ignorant? Such questions lead a man deep into himself and into God.

They must be settled away from the noise of men and the world.

2. *Reading the Scriptures.* If a minister always comes to the Bible in an intellectual and critical spirit, for the purpose of procuring themes for sermons, or of propping up his theological theories, he will deprive his spiritual nature of its proper nourishment. It is a delightful thing to meet a minister who has both an intellectual and a spiritual apprehension of the Scriptures — who is "a Bible man" — who feeds upon the hidden manna of the word, and who is taught by a wisdom higher than that of the schools.

It is well to select, on some plan, as the lesson for the day, a definite chapter, half chapter, or sometimes single passage or sentence, although more than this may be read, if we seek for actual progress in the understanding of the word of God; but we are often so feeble in our spiritual life, that if we can but maintain our life it is a great thing. In reading the Bible for spiritual and devotional ends, the mind should not be allowed to run into a speculative current — the search after strange things; but the endeavor should be simply to know how God speaks to our souls in his word. Our studies and meditations should be as simple as possible — just the wellings up into our hearts of the spring of divine truth, which we open; it is letting God speak to and in us by his word, and listening to his voice in

silence. In all our reading of the Bible, we should seek to find Him who is revealed therein — God as Redeemer; and if we do not read much, let it be with great earnestness of desire to know more of God's manifestation of himself in Christ, in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily — to get a daily glimpse of the face of Jesus.

We wish to impress the truth that a minister has such a constant drain upon his spiritual strength and resources, that he must have constant replenishing from divine sources to enable him to sustain this demand. To use a homely simile, a laboring man needs more food than other men; so a man who labors in the word requires more spiritual nourishment than others.

3. *Prayer.* In speaking of prayer at this time, we refer to secret prayer — to the drawing nigh to God for one's own spiritual guidance, health, and salvation. Prayer is the actual contact of the soul with God, with that divine personality who is the source of its life, from contact with whom springs new strength. Much has been written on prayer, but no one has ever solved its dynamics, for it belongs to the unrevealed mysteries of our relations with God; but however mysterious, prayer is a real application of the soul to God for aid, with the perfect confidence of a child, laying open the most secret thoughts, the inmost wants, to the heavenly Father. Such prayer is necessary to make an earnest ministry. It should be secret, habitual, frequent. The minister, who, in addition to his own great wants and sins, has the burden of souls resting upon him, needs a double portion of the spirit of prayer. He should be a prayerful man, —

(*a.*) That he may be *kept in the spirit of his work.* Our Lord said to his disciples, "*Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting;*" which might mean power to work in coöperation with God, and in the spirit of Christ, in his ministry — power to convert men, which in some sense is a miraculous work. The apostles evidently

remembered these words of the Lord, when they afterward told the church to choose men for the secular business of the church, "*but we will give ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.*"

While the disciples were praying together, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and consecrated them to their work; and in this way they received special preparation for it. As the ministry is a work of faith, so the life of faith, is prayer. St. Bernard is quoted as saying, "*Utilis lectio, utilis eruditio, sed magis necessaria unctio, quippe quæ docet ab omnibus.*" This heavenly unction, this anointing of the Holy Ghost the Enlightener, this spirit of life, light, and power, which enters into all things, and uses all for edification, comes through prayer; and we may say, that prayer prepares for study, work, preaching—every duty. It wins for us the harmonious coöperation of the Spirit, it keeps our minds in a clear, healthy, courageous, hopeful, loving, believing tone. Vinet finely remarks on this point (Pas. Theol., p. 115), "Prayer is necessary to keep us at the proper point of vision, which is always escaping from us, to heal the wounds of self-love and of feeling, to renew our courage, to anticipate the always threatened invasion of indolence, of levity, of dilatoriness, and spiritual and ecclesiastical pride, of pulpit vanity, of professional jealousy. Prayer resembles the air of certain isles of the ocean, the purity of which will allow no life to vermin. With this atmosphere we should compass ourselves about, as the diver surrounds himself with the bell before he descends into the sea."

(*b.*) That he may be *a true interpreter of the word.* Dr. Owen said, "For a man solemnly to undertake the interpretation of Scripture without invocation of God to be taught and instructed by his Spirit, is a provocation of him; nor shall I expect the discovery of truth from any one who thus proudly engages in a work so much above his ability. Without this one cannot be satisfied that he hath attained the mind of the Spirit in any divine revelation."

Scholarly ministers are sometimes tempted to neglect this higher aid; but divine truth will not let itself be won by intellectual methods, and one, as of old, must still be taught directly by Christ, who reveals more to the prayerful spirit than he does to the keenest scholarship; and this is not disparaging scholarship. As an illustration of that remark, Leighton's commentaries on the Epistles of Peter are fruits of such a prayerful interpretation of the Scriptures; and though their learning may be far exceeded, yet their teaching quality, the light beyond reason, the unction and heavenly wisdom in them, probably never will be excelled.

(*c.*) *That he may be an intercessor for the souls of his people.* The intercessory prayer, as has been before said, seems to belong peculiarly to the pastor, for he must pray for those for whom he is in some true sense responsible. Paul said of his flock, "*I make mention of you always in my prayers;*" and if a minister has a true idea of his work, he will not neglect the instrumentality of prayer — prayer for the Holy Spirit, who alone makes the truth effectual.

(*d.*) *That he may accomplish great things in his ministry.* The ministry is itself the greatest of works when it simply accomplishes its own ends; but it may, by the help of God, have something of the ancient apostolic power.

At the open grave of John Evangelist Gossner, it was said of him, "He prayed up the walls of hospitals; he prayed mission stations into being, and missionaries into faith; he prayed open the hearts of the rich, and gold from the most distant lands." As for his sermons, the power of his words was evidently in the prayer which winged them with a resistless force to the hearts of his hearers; for prayer was the breath of his life. "Here I sit," he would say, "in my little room. I cannot go here and there to arrange and order everything; and if I could, who knows if it would be well done? But the Lord is there, who knows and can do everything, and I give it all over to him, and beg him to direct it all, and order it after his holy will; and then my

heart is light and joyful, and I believe and trust him that he will carry it nobly out." This man's achievements in the cause of his Master were almost incredible in their variety and vastness; and when he died, the universal feeling of the hundreds of missionaries whom he had sent forth and sustained, single-handed, was "Who will now pray for us?" This was the spirit of Wesley, of Francke, of Luther, of Zuingle, of Paul, of all ministers and Christians who have done great works for Christ, who have turned men from darkness to light, who have saved multitudes from perishing, who have built up great benevolences, who have deepened the faith of their age, and advanced the kingdom of Christ in the world. They have been, in a marked degree, men of prayer, "*filled with the Holy Ghost.*"

§ 34. *Intellectual Culture.*

A minister should have before him a high ideal, but he should at the same time regard it in its due relations of parts, and not lose sight of its great object; for while it partakes of the nature of many other human callings, and has much, in an intellectual point of view, in common with them, yet it rises above them, and stands alone in this, that it is a work in the domain of spirit, that it is supremely a spiritual work, that its chief qualifications are spiritual.

Intellectual qualifications come in their proper place, and so viewed are of great value. Scholarly culture adds power to the mind, compacts it, toughens it, renders it a more polished instrument; yet to make this scholarly culture the highest aim of the ministry would be an error, for the foundation of the ministry does not lie in the sphere of human intellect, but of those things which are objects of faith.

In reference to preaching as a spiritual exercise, Dr. Skinner has some weighty remarks. He says, "The nature of preaching as spiritual work — work not to be done without the coöperation of the Spirit — acquaints us with the part

which prayer has in preparing for it. The divine does not concur with the human, in this free and holy operation, but at the urgent and continued exertion of the human. May a man make a sermon without consciously looking to the Spirit, and seeking his assistance, when without this he cannot read the Scriptures, or do ought else, as he should? It is an intuition of conscience that a preacher is required, by the business of his vocation, to be, above others, a man of prayer. Is it not manifest that this, in truth, must be the main business with every preacher who really regards preaching as an impossibility to man without aid from above? He will, of course, give to the work study, invention, the closest application of his mind, the highest use of his talent, learning, culture; but in all, and more than all, he will be praying in the spirit with all prayer and supplication, that the Holy Spirit may not cease to work mightily within him, illuminating, sanctifying, strengthening, directing, the exercise of his faculties, until he has completed his preparation." If the preacher is not absorbed in the divine idea of his work, in its dependence upon higher spiritual power, he has not obtained the grand conception of his work, and is a tyro in it, or worse. If he cannot hope to impart to the people "*some spiritual gift*," even the blessing of the gospel of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost accompanying the word preached, he should cease to strive to be a minister, and give himself to some lower employment. This gift of the Spirit makes all men one; and a man who preaches in reliance on this, and in the spirit of the gospel, can reach all hearts, and his education, instead of spoiling him as a preacher to ignorant men, will fit him to be a better preacher to them, as Christ humbled himself to the lowest and poorest to raise them up.

The true preacher, whose love, like that of Paul, yearns toward every man, to bring him to the knowledge of Christ, can never "drift away" from any human heart, or any class of human beings, though he were the first scholar in the

world. His scholarship is an accident, but his love is a permanent condition of his being; it fills him with a higher spirit, it celestializes his nature, it makes him like Christ in the comprehensiveness of his sympathies, it annihilates human distinctions, and gives him a divine view of man and of the soul.

Such a man is inwardly compelled to cultivate his mind and develop all his powers, that he may have more to give to God, more to use in the service of this divine love, and that he may gain thereby other talents in the kingdom of God.

1. As to the *value* of scholarly culture to a minister of the gospel. That may be seen from *the estimate set upon it in the Scriptures;* for while dependence on human wisdom is forbidden in the Scriptures, yet knowledge, study, sound learning, are commended. Mal. 2 : 7, "*For the priest's lips should keep knowledge.*" It was the Preacher who wrote (Prov. 18 : 1), "*Through desire a man, having separated himself, seeketh and intermeddleth with all wisdom.*" 2 Tim. 2 : 15, "*A workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" Paul's quotations show not only his scholarship, but his conception of the legitimate use of learning in preaching.

Every kind of truth which is in conformity to fact, or to the reality of things, is the creation of God, and belongs, in some sense, to the sphere of divine things, it has its bearing on the highest spiritual truth; and thus the most purely scientific truth is not without use in the knowledge of God. Christianity is not a religion of the senses or of forms, but of moral truths, and is thus ever on the side of the highest intelligence.

Scholarly culture is also valuable, because it tends *to make one intellectually humble.* Earnest study keeps down self-conceit, since it causes a man to see how little he knows, and what are the limitations of human knowledge, and what is truth's vastness. To know these things is really the philosophical foundation of Christianity, which is the realization

of human nothingness, and its need of higher enlightenment. True theology is humble, because it has gained some conception of the incomprehensibility of the infinite. A man who studies any branch of science sees what a life-long toil it requires to make himself proficient in it, to say nothing of mastering it. By study in any direction, in any department of knowledge, one is brought to so many doors leading into entirely new kingdoms of knowledge, which he can have no hope ever to explore, that he grows less self-confident every step he takes.

Scholarly culture, yet again, is valuable to the minister *as a preventive of mental poverty*. An instructor who fails to keep up his studies is fast on the road to mental bankruptcy; and a minister, above all, has this necessity of study laid upon him, because he cannot, like an ordinary instructor, change his class; he has substantially the same hearers before him for years, perhaps for a lifetime, and all of them (or it should be so) are advancing intellectually through his instructions. In the course of years, other things being equal, a minister who studies and one who does not will begin to exhibit a marked difference in their influence upon the community, and in the estimation in which they are held. People discover that the unstudious man is repeating himself, and that he is living on his old stock in trade; but a studious man's "profiting," or actual gain, will "appear unto all." Studious ministers wear out popular ministers, and grow themselves into popularity, if they are not "Dryasdusts." They grow imperceptibly in the public confidence; their opinion is worth more than other men's; they have more weight with other ministers. In the pulpit they will gradually gather before them a more substantial class of hearers, and their congregations will themselves advance in intelligence. It is felt that they rise with the increase of pressure upon them, that they are able to meet the intellectual demands made upon them by the best and leading minds in the church, and that they do honor to the town

or community where they live. If their religious character is commensurate with their intellectual, they come to be regarded as invaluable servants of the public, and their influence for good is immeasurable. Besides this, the mind untasked is weakened. It was President Wayland's rule that in order to increase the force of our mental faculties we should use them to the utmost: if a man wishes to become a thinker, he must think; if a reasoner, he must reason. It is true that a minister can sometimes *get along* without severe study, and he could probably satisfy the intellectual requirements of here and there a parish without destroying himself with hard study; yet in almost all of our New England, and, as to that, Western villages, there are intellectual men, men of education, or, at all events, men of strong minds, who know what good thinking and sermonizing are; so that, if one does not study, and slips along with the aid of a facile pen, he will inevitably lose the respect of his people, or of those best capable of judging. He will convince them that he is not in earnest. He will also deteriorate as a preacher. John Wesley wrote to a minister who had neglected study, "Hence your talent in preaching does not increase; it is just the same as it was seven years ago. It is lively, but not deep; there is little variety; there is no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this. You can never be a deep preacher without it, any more than a thorough Christian."[1] It is the glory of our Congregational ministry that it has been, as a general rule, a scholarly ministry; and they should not lose this preëminence, or trust to any fanciful idea of ephemeral popularity. An ancient church father wrote, "*Oportet enim episcopus non tantum docere, sed et discere; quia et ille melius docet, qui quotidie crescit et proficit discendo meliora.*"[2]

For his growth then, for the demands of his own mind,

[1] Stevens' History of Methodism.
[2] Cyprian. Epis. 74, ad Pompeium.

for his increase in actual being, power, and worth, if for no other reasons, a minister should be a diligent student.

True scholarly culture also prevents *a one-sided mental development.* A person engaged in one course of study, or labor, however important, is very apt to become exclusive and one-sided, and is inclined to view everything by a strictly professional estimate, and to think that studies out of his own line are altogether unimportant. One may thus be a theological student all his life, and nothing else, and he may have little conception of the general progress of science. He becomes, perhaps, a strenuous partisan of some theological school; he travels around the same circle of ideas; he will admit nothing new into his mind, and thus he gradually narrows his mind until it comes to a very small point indeed; but a minister of the all-comprehending, all-loving God should be a man of liberal culture, and able himself to add something to theology from the other sciences. Thus if he is a student of mineralogy or geology, he can make better sermons; or, if he is a man who is in some degree of harmony with the advance of knowledge, his preaching will have a freshness of proof and a breadth of illustration that will delight and impress. If he is at home in human knowledge, his people will feel confidence that he is well instructed in divine knowledge. There is a simple parable sometimes told to children. A certain king instructed his son in the art of governing men. "The great art of governing," he said, "is to make the people believe that the king knows more than his subjects." "But how," asked the son, "shall he make men believe this?" The king answered, "By knowing more." He who instructs, at least in those things in which he instructs others, should strive to be more thoroughly and profoundly informed than his hearers. He should have a wide margin of knowledge, that will make him a free instructor; he should teach from himself, from the inward richness of his wisdom. For what is a man of culture? He is one who has developed his mind from the centre out-

ward, through all its capacities for growth and improvement, and who has left no part of his nature uncultivated.

Scholarly culture also has its influence *to make a comprehensive theologian*. We are too apt to view theology solely in its fixed scientific forms, and not as a growing knowledge of God, of all that is revealed of God, which comprises all other knowledges, and which prompts to ever wider search and generalization. A man is not a theologian who has acquired some facility in the use of theological terms, or who has read a few of the principal theological treatises; there is a Greek proverb that "he is the best divine who divines most;" and he is the true theologian who is a constant and growing student of all manifestations of the divine in nature, man, the word, and the spirit.

Vinet says, "All becomes theology for a theologian." There is a theological instinct which appropriates everything of God, wherever found; which brings all knowledge into an organic whole; which unites free scientific investigation in every direction around, with a subordination of all to the spirit of Christ. This is a living theology, which does not suffer itself to become imprisoned in any one speculative school, but gathers new ideas and widens its dominion over the whole field of truth; and its true field is not controversy, but truth; it is impelled by the love of truth, wherever it can find truth.

2. In regard to the *nature* or kind of ministerial studies, of course *theology* comes first. There are certain truths which God has placed at the foundation, and that cannot be placed at the top without breaking through and destroying the whole edifice of truth; and the minister of Christ should strive to discover this divine order and system, and to arrive at essential truth, to separate the real from the speculative, the true from the empirical, the divine from the human. This every minister may do, to some extent, for himself. He should take human theologians, not in the light of masters, "*for one is your Master, even Christ*," but

rather as guides to some higher system of truth, which, perhaps, can never be perfected in this world, so that he is always a student.

Those standard theological writers whom he has read, perhaps fragmentarily or only in quotation, he should, if possible, begin to read with more care in the original; and thus he comes at the views of theologians in the past at first hand, for they belong to him as much as they do to any other theologian. Of course the chief source of theology is the word of God, and to hold to the true inspiration of the word, the divine revelation of God that there is in it, without bibliolatry, to be "*able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit*," — this is the narrow and difficult road which the theologians of the present age have to walk.

It is not necessary to say that *philological* and *linguistic* studies, in these days, belong to a thorough culture; indeed, we are disposed to place their value above the study of theology itself, because they enable the minister to study the Bible independently, and to arrive at original views of revealed religion. The study of the *Hebrew*, though it is difficult, yet, after the scholar has broken through the rough rind of the language, is not extremely difficult for practical purposes, and it affords a life-long banquet; for in the Hebrew we seem to approach to the simplicity of nature, and perhaps to the very words of God. Its antique grandeur and unsoftened strength, seen in the predominance of the consonantal element, and the preservation of the simple root, despising inflections which cannot be grafted upon the root itself, — the radical and underived superiority of its verbs, showing their primitive emotive formation, — these and other features lead us back to what the Germans call the "*ur-welt*" — to the elder hills and plains, the shepherds, and the period when men came near God in the fresh youth of the world. A recent writer in the Edinburgh Review (June, 1868) says, "A knowledge of Greek

is considered absolutely necessary for the clergy; but, in the present state of theological controversy, a thorough knowledge of Hebrew is even more necessary. On almost every disputed point of biblical criticism, the man who is not a Hebrew scholar is entirely at the mercy of the man who is." The absolute need of the study of *Greek*, we surely need not discuss. The knowledge of Greek which most educated ministers possess, not being kept up to the critical standard, is insufficient for original research, and is apt to break down at the decisive point. In difficult and doubtful passages, it is only the man who is profoundly acquainted with the idioms of classic and of Hellenic Greek who is of any value or authority. Bradford Homer, who died young, made Demosthenes' "Oration on the Crown" his constant study, not only to help him in his style, but in his interpretation of the Scriptures. The study of Plato, in its moral uses to a minister, as a standard of comparison in philosophical and Christian ethics, is, perhaps, of more benefit than even in its philological and strictly scholarly uses. We will not dwell upon the study of *Latin*, which is not only the language of Cicero and Seneca, but of the writings of the Latin fathers, and also of Calvin and the German reformers, of Turretin, Grotius, and the standard Latin commentators.

Let us not be understood as saying that classical attainments are absolutely essential to a minister of Jesus Christ, but that they are highly useful. Greek may be, indeed, in the old world, a sure road to a bishopric; but there are ministers of the gospel who cannot read New Testament Greek, and who are yet true bishops and shepherds of souls, and eminently useful preachers, though perhaps none more than they grieve over their want of sound learning.

The importance of the knowledge of *German*, while often regarded in an extravagant light, is doubtless great; and, rich as is the German literature, the language is chiefly valuable to a minister as the language of philological

science, of true learning, which, it must be confessed, is principally, in our day, to be found in the German; yet let the preacher beware of becoming Germanized in his thought or his style; if so, farewell to his usefulness in the pulpit; but let him keep his German for the study, and his English for the pulpit.

One is apt to be discouraged in regarding the scholarly requirements of his profession thus *en masse;* but if one views it in a common-sense, practical way, this discouragement vanishes. Let it be supposed that a minister is already, to some extent, an educated man, at least professionally; he has thus made a beginning of the study of theology; he knows already something of the bounds and limits of that great science, of its history and literature; he is also more or less familiar with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; he may have made some little progress in German: now, all that is to be done (and this is the way to true scholarly culture) is, to keep up these studies faithfully, and not to suffer himself to lose the ground already gained; and he need not become a mere scholar in the process, or lose the fire of action, or interfere with the more important duties of the ministry.

Without speaking further of those studies in *metaphysics*, *philosophy*, *history*, *natural science*, and *English literature*, which are required to build up a broad intellectual culture, attained by few, and perhaps unattainable except by a few, yet when vivified by faith, presenting a noble type of the Christian scholar, let us now look at, —

3. The *method* of study.

Jonathan Edwards speaks of himself thus: "My method of study, from my first beginning the work of the ministry, has been very much by *writing;* applying myself, in this way, to improve every important hint; pursuing the clew to my utmost when anything in reading, meditation, or conversation, has been suggested to my mind that seemed to promise light on any weighty point; thus penning what

appeared to me my best thoughts, on innumerable subjects, for my own benefit. The longer I prosecute my studies in this method, the more habitual it becomes, and the more pleasant and profitable I find it."[1]

Samuel Hopkins says of himself, "I have been able to study fourteen hours in a day, generally rising at four o'clock in the morning, or between four and five, especially in the winter season."

The simple diet and equable habits, as well as giant frame and giant will, of this New England theologian, enabled him to do this; but Christian pastors of this day cannot be the close in-door students that ministers once were: their purely pastoral duties have, happily, increased, and they work more in the society of living men and living interests than of books.

Dr. Emmons (Park's Memoir, p. 71) says, "I made a practice of paying my principal attention to *but one subject at a time*. This had a happy tendency to engage all the powers of the mind, and especially to set invention at work, which is a faculty very necessary to investigate truth, and which nothing but necessity or a firm resolution will call into exercise. It is much easier to read, to hear, to converse, than to *investigate;* which requires the whole attention of the mind to be steadily fixed upon one subject. Reading and conversing upon a subject will never make a master of it, without close and steady thinking, and a fair and full decision. And no man can make a fair and full decision upon any abstract or intricate point until he has thoroughly examined it on all sides, and fairly balanced the principal arguments for and against it. Hence I perceived the importance of attending to but one subject at a time, and of not leaving that subject before I came to a satisfactory and final decision." This was Dr. Emmons' golden rule. He had a large idea of ministerial mental culture.

[1] Life, Lon. ed., p. 216.

He says (p. 72), "I accustomed myself to attend to all subjects which appeared to be naturally connected with divinity, and calculated to qualify me for the work of the ministry. That all the arts and sciences bear some relation to each other, was long ago observed by Cicero, and has ever since been found to be true by all who have read and studied upon an extended scale. It is extremely difficult to gain a close understanding of natural and revealed religion without a considerable degree of general knowledge. The more I attended to theology, the more I was convinced of the importance of acquainting myself with history, ethics, metaphysics, and civil polity."

Again, he says (p. 82), "Let divinity be your supreme study, with an eye to which let all your other reading, study, conversation, and remarks be directed."

Again (p. 82), "Begin the study of divinity at the root, and not at the branches; that is to say, begin at the first principles of theology, which are few and plain, and afterwards trace them out in their various consequences."

And still again (p. 82), "Follow not too strictly the path of any particular divine or divines: for by *following* you will never overtake them; but endeavor, if possible, to find out some new, nearer, and easier way by which you may get before them, and really add some pittance to the common stock of theological knowledge."

Some of his general observations upon study and reading are admirable, and worthy of being kept in constant remembrance. "*Steady, patient, persevering thinking will generally surmount every obstacle in the search of truth.*" "In reading authors, aim more at possessing yourselves with their *general scheme and principal arguments* than with particular expressions and incidental sentiments; and while you labor to retain their ideas, labor to forget their words, which, if retained, will tend to prevent your making their idea your own." He was accustomed to say, "Never despair of a student who has *one* clear idea."

The peculiarity of *Bela B. Edwards'* mind and scholarship was in what the Greeks called ἀκρίβεια, or exactness; critical precision in his method of study, going on slowly, but surely, to the mastering of ten languages, and to the reading of Hebrew as one would read English; his learning meanwhile not extinguishing his imagination, taste, or piety.

Dr. Chalmers, even in the most active portion of his life, was able to secure daily, on an average, five hours of study. His biographer said of him, "His strength lay in his indomitable resolution to master whatever he had undertaken to do." There was nothing spurious in his fame; it was the result of severe labor and thought. Chalmers said of himself that "the more labor he put in a sermon, the more effective he always found it to be." He believed in hard study, and quoted a saying of Dr. Johnson, when asked if a man should wait for an inspiration before he wrote — "No, sir; he should sit down doggedly."

Dr. Wayland says very much the same thing about himself — that "whatever he had accomplished in the world had been done by days' works."

F. W. Robertson's biography affords many hints of the methods in which his scholarly culture, that gave such depth, and such nobility of form, to everything he wrote, was obtained. He was an indefatigable worker. He studied German by making written translations of the best German authors. He said of himself, "I read hard or not at all — never skimming, never turning aside to many inviting books; and Plato, Aristotle, Butler, Thucydides, Jonathan Edwards, have passed like the iron atoms of the blood into my mental constitution." In the conflicts of the day upon the inspiration and canon of the Scriptures, he felt the need of an accurate and ample knowledge of the Bible. His biographer says of him, "It was his habit, when dressing in the morning, to commit to memory daily a certain number of verses of the New Testament. In this way, before

leaving the university, he had gone twice over the English version, and once and a half through the Greek. With his eminent power of arrangement, he mentally combined and recombined all the prominent texts under fixed heads of subjects. He said, long afterwards, to a friend, that, owing to this practice, no sooner was any Christian doctrine or duty mentioned in conversation, or suggested to him by what he was writing, than all the passages bearing on the point seemed to array themselves in order before him."[1] His idea of study was to have some plan, even if a poor one, which prevented discursiveness — in his own words, "the steady habit of looking forward to a distant end, unalterably working on until he had attained it — the habit, in fact, of never beginning anything which is not to be finished."

A few plain, practical suggestions will conclude this particular theme. (1.) *Systematize time.* The economy of time is a golden secret. Many men of frail and even diseased physical organization have accomplished wonders by carrying out a regular plan of study, and making all things bend to it. It is well for one's people to get the idea that the morning is sacred to study, and not to be broken in upon, excepting in cases of necessity. Many a noble mind has been prostrated by midnight study; and sleep is quite as essential to the student as to the day laborer. No man, excepting at critical times, when an extraordinary effort is called for, is justified in violating the plain laws of health in his studies. System and industry should make up for the necessity of injuriously protracted labor. Besides a general plan of study, the pastor may economize his time by devoting certain portions of every day to some particular study or pursuit. Let half an hour each day, for instance, be given to Greek, and it is wonderful how much a man may accomplish by this daily half hour in a year. These

[1] Robertson's Life, vol. i. p. 18.

fragments of time are to be carefully gathered up. The motto of an Italian scholar was, "Time is my estate." (2.) *Seek concentration in study.* The German writer John George Hamann had a favorite idea, which he expresses in many ways, that "whatever a man undertakes to do, whether it be a great or small work, he should give the entire energies of his mind to it, and there should be no partial works." This is that principle of thoroughness which one is so long in learning, but which alone can make a scholar. Thoreau says, "If we drive a nail, it should be done thoroughly." Concentration is the law of all mental progress: from one point, clearly understood, the area of related knowledge around increases — slowly at first, then more rapidly; and this ability of concentrated thought is the supreme mental achievement, which once acquired, so far as the intellectual part of his profession is concerned, the minister is prepared for his work. It is not merely seeming to be a great worker, but it is fixing the mind with a determined attention upon one subject, and holding it there. (3.) *When one works, let him work; when one plays, let him play.* In the process of study, the nervous system is drawn upon to supply stimulus and activity to the brain; when, therefore, one wishes to recreate and refresh his mind, let him not blend the intellectual with the physical exercise; let him not take a Greek classic to walk with him, for, although he may and must carry around his sermon in his head with him, yet he should do the hard thinking in his study, and leave nature some free play and liberty. The German student devotes a small portion of the day to entire relaxation, to genuine play; and that is one reason why he can achieve such incredible results in the way of study. (4.) *Employ proper helps.* The habit of writing while studying was, we have seen, the method of the elder Edwards; and it is said by some, Never read or study without the pen in hand. There is, however, much difference of opinion here; for what one gains by note-books, he is

apt to lose in mental power and tenacity; and it is better to have the thought wrought into the mind by reflection — by the "afterthought"—than to have it never so well classified and laid away in a book. At all events, the student must, in some way, gather up and save what he acquires; and there can be no extended investigation, or nothing which can be called "learning," without this. Dr. Channing studied pen in hand, filling the book he was reading with folded sheets of paper, on which notes were rapidly written, "rarely quotations, but chiefly questions and answers, qualifications, condensed statements, germs of interesting views; and when the volume was finished, they were carefully selected, and, under distinct heads, were placed among other papers in a secretary." Any process, in fact, which enables one to preserve what he gains by reading and study, is the chief thing; and men greatly differ in their mental habits. One may write down a passage or thought of an author, and then, from some aversion or infirmity, never look at the writing again; while another man cannot remember at all, without going through some such mechanical process of transcription and revision. Dr. Emmons' plan, to fasten the idea or thought in one's mind by dwelling upon it and forgetting the words, can at least injure no one. A strong desire, an excitation and intense want of the mind, accompanied by a determinate effort of the will to make the thought one's own, is, after all, the best way to impress a truth on the mind.

A minister's library is generally the index of his scholarly progress, though not always so; for he may be so cramped in means as not to be able to surround himself with books, or he may pile up learned books with a good intention to possess himself of their contents, without having the resolution or the ability to do so. George Herbert says, "The country parson's library is a holy life."

§ 35. *Moral Culture.*

Much that surrounds the name of a minister, and gives it the halo of sanctity, belongs to the office more than to the man; but character, is something essentially personal, belonging to a man's independent being, and it is built up through the *voluntary* working of the formative moral law, whatever it may be, true or false, in the soul. It is the development of the inward life, or the growth of a subjective principle, which is strengthened by all outward means, nutriment and free activity. A perfect and thoroughly furnished minister is not made by the mere laying on of the hands of the presbytery, or by installation into the pastorate; but the product of a right ministerial character is a gradual process, and is the fruit of daily habits of thought and action. And let me mention a few of these elements of *self-culture* which enter into the formation of a true and noble ministerial character.

(*a.*) *The cultivation of habits of active goodness.*

A man may heap up sacred learning, but if he fails to make a practical use of it for his increase in piety, and for the good of others, it is a talent buried. Melanchthon, scholar as he was, said, in reference to his theological studies, "*Ego mihi conscius sum, nunquam aliam ob causam tractavisse theologiam, nisi ut me ipsum emendarem.*" Legh Richmond affirmed that he gained his greatest wisdom and highest lessons in piety in the cottages of the poor; and in like manner Dr. Arnold recommended prayer and visiting the poor as the antidote to decline in spirituality. "*Exercise thyself* [as in a gymnasium] *unto godliness*," was the apostolic requirement; and Paul summed up this ministerial quality of practical religion with the injunction, "*Do the work of an evangelist;*" have an aggressive and missionary piety which has its root in a deep faith, but which is piety of a healthy and athletic sort, that need not be put under a

glass case, and that can bear the knocks and strains of life. The unpractical nature of preaching frequently arises from the fact that ministerial piety is of a scholastic kind, and does not appeal to all hearts as something common and genuine. It does not come down to what *is*, but is ever dealing with what *should be;* it does not grapple with the awful stupidity and sin of men's hearts, and does not go forth from its intellectual seclusion to study the broad book of humanity, to meet and mingle with all kinds of characters and men. To do this requires often a painful effort, and a conscious return to the Source of all strength; it requires the awakening of the Christian sense which places things in their just relations, and makes scholarship of infinitely less value than that "*faith which worketh by love*," and which strives for the welfare of humanity. "Character," says Novalis, is "educated will." This is the ἡ ἀρετή of the New Testament, the virile moral quality that makes the minister "*able to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ*." A minister, it cannot be denied, has many temptations to become a pietest or a sentimentalist in religion; but let him keep in full vigor his will to do good, his moral manhood; let him "*add to his faith virtue*," or that energic quality which enables faith to carry out its good and high inspirations, which concentrates and sanctifies all the powers of the being in the fulfilling of one high purpose. Thus a minister should become more than a man of words — more than a talker — more than a holy and valorous man in the pulpit; for how often it is that one thinks he is a leader in all goodness, that he is doing great things for Christ, when, after all, he is but talking or dreaming about doing them. He who is constantly preaching is too apt to think that talking is doing — that words are deeds; and in truth they may be sometimes, but they may be often a miserable substitute for practical good activity; and to pen high thoughts in a comfortable study is a thing very different from "going about doing good" with the self-sacrificing spirit of Christ.

(*b.*) *The cultivation of the principle of self-denial.* The ministerial quality of σωφροσύνη is much spoken of by the apostle, hard to translate, but it conveys the idea of that mental and moral soundness which comes from the principle of self-control, from a true balance of the mind, it suffers no faculty or desire to obtain undue prominence and influence, and, above all, it implies the conquest of the fleshly mind. Paul says, "*I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection, lest, having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.*" The body or the soul will rule; one of them must be subjugated to the other; and even after the spiritual victory is gained, a continual watchfulness is needed to preserve that which is gained; and, in all things that have an evil tendency, the only safe rule is, to resist the beginnings of evil. It is said of Bishop Heber that he would not continue to read anything which he found had an influence to demoralize the thoughts; and though this may indicate a sense of weakness, it shows also the extreme watchfulness which this good servant of Christ kept over himself. Even the Mohammedans have a proverb, that it is a sign that a man has reached his maturity when he applies all his powers to please God, and no longer seeks the gratification of his lower nature.

In what has been said upon this subject it is not meant that the body should be neglected or despised, for so large a department of the mental nature, the tastes, sensibilities, and affections, are closely allied to the physical nature, and the body should receive a genial and generous treatment; it should be kept under, but at the same time it should be kept healthy, strong, and serviceable; it should not be starved by asceticism, nor enfeebled by an injudicious system of labor. Depend upon it, good health, and even the expression of a sound physical organism, and of a happy spirit, in the outward appearance, are moral powers in the work of the ministry. The nervous and "preternatural excitement," the total tyranny of the mind over the body,

which characterized the life of F. W. Robertson, was doubtless one of the causes of the sadness of his life, and of its premature ending. The beginnings of his ministerial life were marked by bodily austerity, which wore him out soon, and obstructed the development of a natural, genial, cheerful piety. This was changed and lamented over afterward, when it was too late, and when he had exhausted himself by his system of mental self-inspection and of bodily asceticism.

The principle of self-denial is the foundation of all Christian nobleness and power. When the people once clearly perceive that there is in their minister that spirit which can and will give up all things, even life itself, for the gospel's sake, although he may not be called upon to do this, except in the exercise of that daily cross-bearing which the Master enjoins, he becomes their strong tower; for he who yields his own will, and enters into God's will, has found the source of strength. One little act of self-sacrifice on the part of a pastor will gain for him far too great praise from his people; and the danger is, that he may repeat the act merely for the sake of the praise and power it brings him.

(c.) *The cultivation of steadiness of character.* This does not mean a repression, or an ironing down of the spontaneousness of the nature, which produces an artificial rigidness; but a restraint put upon false and hasty impulses, or a habit of acting from principle rather than from sheer impulse. A stability of spirit which is not easily thrown off its balance, a control of the emotions without an unnatural restraining of them, a repose and solidity of character which are above the reach of ordinary excitement, and above the show of petty resentment at petty insults, — these, doubtless, enter into the apostolic conception of "*gravity*." There should be something of the "rock Peter" in the minister of Christ — a calm strength, on which others can lean. He should strive to be the same man at all times, for he who is set to govern the church of God must first learn to govern himself. "The

Christian minister should not be found frequently changing his plans and playing experiments in his parish, taking up a cause with warmth to-day, and then abandoning it to-morrow; but there should be a consistent regularity, a calm uniformity, in his bearing. This will inspire confidence, and make men feel that he is one on whom they can reckon."[1]

This "gravity" should not become an artificial solemnity. Quaint Thomas Fuller says of the minister, that he should not be "too austere and retired, which is laid to the charge of good Mr. Hooper, the martyr, that his rigidness frightened the people from consulting with him. 'Let your light,' saith Christ, 'shine before men;' whereas over-reservedness makes the brightest virtue burn dim. Especially he detesteth affected gravity (which is rather on men than in them), whereby some belie their register-book, antedate their age to seem far older than they are, and plait and set their brows in an affected sadness." There should be in the minister of Christ the simple dignity of one who stands upon and proclaims eternal truth, who by his very looks teaches truth, trust, a serene and divine elevation of purpose.

(*d.*) *The cultivation of a cheerful spirit.* He who is to be the sustainer and consoler of others, who stands as the representative of the divine Comforter, should show that there are good cheer and peace in his own heart; for if one falls into a desponding mood, and supposes that his preaching does no good, or that his presence is distasteful to his people, or that he is unfitted for the work of the ministry — this is just the opposite of that spirit "*of power, of love, of a sound mind*" which the apostle sets forth and enjoins. A pastor should be accessible and sociable, and should not even lose his relish for those pleasures and enjoyments that promote kindly wit and cheerfulness. He should not forget how to laugh; and it is wonderful how a good, honest laugh dissipates spleen, and makes the blood circulate healthily, while

[1] Oxenden.

an unsmiling and over-anxious minister wearies his people, as if they had a spectre always before them. One should feel earnestly his responsibilities, and not have a superficial light-heartedness amid great duties and cares; but he should strive to roll off his cares upon God, and maintain a bright, cheerful spirit; and since cheerfulness commonly springs from love, love can do and say things that power, and even reason, cannot. It is a great thing, too, for a pastor to establish a hopeful and cheerful type of piety among his people: this will contribute to the healthy growth of the church, and will keep out a sickly and sorrowful style of religion, which never flourished in the good soil of the primitive church.

(*e.*) *The cultivation of the qualities of prudence and patience.* "*Prudence*" is nearly equivalent to what is frequently alluded to in the New Testament as "wisdom,"—"*warning and teaching every man in all wisdom*,"—"*wise to win souls*,"—and is a divine and comprehensive grace, that leads into all wise action as well as wise speech. It is, as Dr. Johnson says, "wisdom applied to practice." Prudence, in some respects, is another word for tact, or a knowledge of human nature, which, surely, they who are to be fishers of men should possess—a sagacious insight into character and motives, without cunning, which is sagacity springing from insincerity, and whose end is to deceive. Prudence often holds in reserve one's act or opinion, and does not the foolish thing, but does the wise thing. It does not seize upon every new thing in philosophy and morals, and every new scheme of reform that offers itself, simply because it is new; it does not subscribe to every plausible but shallow project, and thus help often to deceive and cheat the whole community. It is not "zeal without knowledge." It avoids even "the appearance of evil," for "*the ministry must not be blamed.*"

This prudence should not run into over-cautiousness, for there should always be more of the lion than the fox in the

Christian minister; in truth, almost anything in the way of rashness is preferable to a *managing* minister, for he generally manages to get himself distrusted and despised.

The quality of *patience* was the crowning quality of our Saviour's character, and we should pray to be "*led into the patience of Christ.*" Paul, in 2 Tim. 3: 24, says that the servant of Christ must be "patient" (ἀνεξίκακον), enduring, or, literally, bearing up under, evil. The want of immediate success in his best plans, the unconquerable apathy or obstinacy of church members, careless and disparaging remarks, schemes of intriguing and mischievous men, the desertion of supposed friends, the trials arising from his own negligences, imperfections, and sins, and especially the unawakened condition of the impenitent of his congregation, — these are painful ordeals of patience. There should, therefore, be infinitely more in a pastor's spiritual life than appears in his outward life — an interior depth of union with God, which no event can destroy or disturb. This inward purity and strength of soul form a coil within him of immeasurable rebound. It is this which gives his word a penetrating force, driving it home to the heart and conscience. This reserved power, this patient strength, hid in God, and called forth only in time of real trial, prove a man to be of the material that a minister of Christ should be made of. He is a man who cannot be conquered.

(*f.*) *The cultivation of a spirit of kindness.* Vinet says of the minister, "He is among men the representation of a thought of mercy, and he represents it by making it incarnate in his own life. To succor is the minister's life." How much power there is even in a kind manner! It is like the sun in spring on the snow and ice of men's hearts. To carry a kind and gentle aspect toward little children, old people, young men, business men, poor people, mothers, servants, high and low, is a constant mild agency promotive of ministerial influence and of the good ends it is aiming at. Paul said to the Thessalonians, "*We were gentle*

among you: even as a nurse cherisheth her children, so being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also out own souls, because ye were dear unto us."

A recent French Roman Catholic author, who seems to write with a true evangelic instinct as regards the pastoral work, remarks, "Men must be much loved in order that they may be well instructed. Whatever they may be, be they ever so guilty, or indifferent, or ungrateful, or however deeply sunk in crime, before all and above all, they must be loved."[1] He says again, "The question is not to ascertain what they are worth, but to save them, such as they are. Our age is a great prodigal son; let us help it to return to the paternal home. Now is the time to recall the admirable words of Fénelon — 'O ye pastors, put away from you all narrowness of heart. Enlarge, enlarge your compassion. You know nothing if you know merely how to command, to reprove, to correct, to expound the letter of the law. Be fathers — yet that is not enough — be as mothers.'"[2] And once more he says, "It is not by essays of reasoning, any more than by the sword, that the moral world is to be swayed. A little knowledge, much sound sense, and much more heart, — that is what is requisite to raise the great mass, the people, and to cleanse and purify them. To be able to reason is human, very human; and one who is a man, and nothing more, may possess that ability as well as you, perhaps in a higher degree. But to lose, to devote one's life, to sacrifice self, is something unearthly, divine, possessing a magic power. Self-devotion, moreover, is the only argument against which human malevolence can find no answer."[3] He quotes St. Augustine's language — "Love first, and then you may do what you choose."

[1] The Clergy and the Pulpit. Mullois, p. 15.
[2] Idem, p. 17. [3] Idem, p. 29.

PART THIRD.

THE PASTOR IN HIS RELATIONS TO SOCIETY

§ 36. *Domestic and Social Relations.*

(1.) *The pastor in his family.* 1 Tim. 3: 1–5, "*A bishop, then, must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)*"

The Roman Catholic author from whom we quoted in the last lecture remarks, "Be it ours, therefore, to love the people. Is it not to that end that we have no family ties? Yes, I invoke pity for the people; pity for their sufferings, their miseries, their prejudices, their deplorable subjection to popular opinion, their ignorance, their errors. Let us, at least, try to do them good — to save them. Therein lies our happiness; we shall never have any other. All other sources are closed to us; there is the well-spring of the most delectable joys. Apart from charity, what remains? Vanity, unprofitableness, bitterness, misery, nothingness." These words, though evidently the words of a noble man, have a sad tone, as if the "bitterness and nothingness" had been experienced because the writer's heart had been closed, by the unscriptural imposition of celibacy, to domestic joys and affections; and

the argument itself by no means holds good, that because a man has no wife and children to love, he will more readily love the people, since he has nothing else to love. But he *has* something else to love; that is, *himself*, or a phantom of the church which he has created, and which is another name, in many instances, for a sanctified love of power, an ambition to embody in himself the church's power. He who happily sustains the married relation is in the best school on earth to learn unselfishness — the unselfish love of all. He is drawn out of himself; he must think of others; he cannot be absorbed in his own plans; his best affections are constantly moved upon, and they have no time to stagnate. In the passage quoted from the pastoral Epistles, the minister is looked upon in his family relations, and every sentence of that weighty apostolic counsel might be profitably dwelt upon.

"*The husband of one wife.*" A minister's wife may, indeed, make or mar him; for if she is not with him in his work, she will be potent to draw him away from his work. She may be thus his good or evil angel, for she is present in his times of weakness and depression, and her influence constantly builds up or undermines the strength of his zeal. De Tocqueville has a striking passage upon a wife's influence in a different relation. He says, "I do not hesitate to say that the women give to every nation a moral temperament which shows itself in politics. A hundred times have I seen weak men show real public virtue because they had by their sides women who supported them, not by advice as to particulars, but by fortifying their feelings of duty, and of directing their ambition. More frequently, I must confess, I have observed the domestic influence gradually transforming a man naturally generous, noble, and unselfish, into a cowardly, commonplace, place-hunting self-seeker, thinking of public business only as a means of making himself comfortable, and this simply by contact with a well-conducted woman, a faithful wife, an excellent

mother, but from whose mind the grand notion of public duty was entirely absent."

The sympathy of a true Christian wife to a minister in his work is something more than common friendship; it is the loving support of a heart true to the divine Master in hours of human suffering and trial — in times when the spirit of a strong man bows itself, and when there is no other earthly friend to whom he would reveal his mental weakness and anguish. Besides, there is a department in the church, in which the ministry of woman is indispensable — and that is, in religious counsel to those of their own sex. Vinet says that "females are the natural confessors of females." Some pastors' wives have been "deaconesses" in the scriptural sense, the instrumentalities of bringing numbers of their own sex to the knowledge of the Saviour.

A true Christian wife can also aid her husband in his preaching, by her finer perception of the feminine mind, and by the suggestive information which she acquires in friendly conversation with others; for her intuitions of character are often more penetrating and true than his slower judgments. Undoubtedly the first duty of a pastor's wife is to her own family, and the pastor has his responsibility here, not to permit the parish to command too much of her time and strength. This is a sacred duty that he owes to his own family.

"*One that ruleth well his own house.*" There should be an organic law of every house, as there is of every government, which shapes its whole theory and character. A minister should strive to make his own household subservient to the interests of Christ's kingdom. An old English writer says, "A family is a small diocese, in which the first essays are made of the episcopal and ecclesiastical zeal, piety, and prudence." The minister should endeavor to harmonize his family with his work, and not to dissociate them from it; for they are given him to help him in his office; and his family should be the means of his greater influence in the special

duties of the ministry, and thus multiply his own influence. His household should be a consecrated household.

The minister should rule his family, as God rules his family, not so much by the hand of absolute authority (though there should be undisputed authority in him as its earthly head), as by the principles of a just moral government, by truth, righteousness, and love. The New Testament speaks much of "the church in the house," and there should be a little church in every minister's house, in which the spirit of Christ, the Son of peace, reigns; in which there is an orderly system in the daily life that enthrones God in everything. Family devotion, as Dr. Bushnell truly says, should be in harmony with the whole religious life of the household, and not one disconnected act, as if it formed all the religion and religious worship of the house. It should be the manifestation or expression of a common and constant spiritual life, and of a home piety in which simplicity, cheerfulness, the spirit of obedient activity, and the spirit of love, reign. Ministers are sometimes inclined to be too loose in the moral government of their families; they excuse themselves on the plea of public duties; but no man should neglect his own for others', unless he would incur the stern apostolic reproof. There has been many a modern Eli among ministers, whose zeal in the house of God could not prevent the ruin of their own families.

"*Given to hospitality.*" The true minister's house, in every age and clime, has been the home of a warm-hearted hospitality and of an efficient benevolence. It has set the fashion and given the law to the parish in those respects. It has been the palace of the poor. That it should maintain this character, and be still more influential in the promotion of the people's happiness, let it be made the abode of an attractive good taste, and of an inexpensive refinement. Let it admit into it the influence of a chastened culture and art, and above all of the harmonizing power of music.

Business habits, method and punctuality in all matters of daily living, also increase the influence of the minister, and tell upon whatever he utters in the pulpit. This is "*the mint, anise, and cummin*," which may not be neglected while he is preaching "*the weightier matters of the law*." Above all, let not the minister become encumbered with debts. Do you say, How can he help it? We answer, He must help it; he must rather do anything that is honest and honorable; for when once deeply in debt, the right arm of his usefulness — his independence — is paralyzed; he cannot say what he will, nor do what he will; but he is another man's servant, and he cannot lose the consciousness of it.

Promptness and accuracy in relation to the business of the church, form a means of influence with others, and especially with business men, who respect the executive talent in man wherever it is found: that they can appreciate. A minister should make no blunders in the management of church business. To be prompt at church meetings, careful to attend to practical engagements connected with the management of church affairs, or of any outside business, especially of a pecuniary nature, — these things increase one's power with men, for they show character, they betoken moral exactitude, which confirms the teachings of a higher righteousness, or rightness. If a man makes an error in these least things, the people will infer, both scripturally and rationally, that he may do the same in greater things. We mention these matters as belonging, in some sense, to the domestic character of a man; and if he is exact in these things at home, he will be apt to be so in his relations to the church.

There is one point in this subject of a minister's regulation of his own household which is of profound moment; that is, the responsibility of the minister for the spiritual condition of his family. It is strange that we are better able to carry out the precepts of a Christian life in public, and toward strangers, than we often are in our own homes,

and toward those we love best. Why is this? Surely a minister, of all men, should not keep his religious graces for the public, and hide them to his own family. A man cannot be a saint in the pulpit, and a selfish, irritable, and uncomfortable person in private life. He may, perhaps, not mean to be so; but he should watch against this tendency to be good and holy occasionally and in the eyes of the world, and not so at home and at all times. A minister not infrequently, we believe, feels smitten with the conviction (especially after preaching in a strange place) that he has exhausted his powers in efforts and appeals to bring souls into the kingdom of heaven — persons whom he will probably never meet again on earth; and what special, skilled, determined effort like this has he put forth to save the souls of his own family!

A minister's family is subject, in a marked manner, to public scrutiny and criticism; and it is better to bear this criticism good-naturedly than to be troubled by it.

While asserting his independence in regard to these domestic matters, yet the pastor may not forget that his family is looked upon, in some sense, as a model family. That should not only stimulate him to be simple and prudent in his domestic matters, to avoid extravagance in all things, and to shun the appearance of evil, but to use this fact as a means of good to others, in order to elevate his people in intelligence, good taste, social feeling, and benevolence. Religion in his home should be made a real thing, a matter of daily life, it should soften the feelings, raise the moral tone, educate the will, liberalize the character, and fill the home with the atmosphere of holy, unselfish love.

Of an old English bishop's house (Bishop Hooper, the martyr), it is said, "It was as if we entered some church or temple. In every corner thereof there was some smell of virtue, good example, honest conversation, and reading of holy Scripture." Of Alleine it is said, that "as he walked about the house, he would make some spiritual

use of everything that did occur, and his lips did drop like the honey-comb to all that were about him."

The author of the Recreations of a Country Parson, after speaking of his being hindered in preparing a sermon by the interruptions of a little child, says, "My sermon will be the better for all these interruptions. I do not mean to say that it will be absolutely good, though it will be as good as I can make it; but it will be better than it would have been if I had not been interrupted at all. The Roman Catholic church meant it well, but it was far mistaken when it thought to make a man a better parish priest by cutting him off from domestic ties, and quite emancipating him from all the worries of domestic life. That might be the way to get men who would preach an unpractical religion, not human in interest, not able to comfort, direct, sustain through daily cares, temptations, and sorrows. But for the preaching which will come home to men's business and bosoms, which will not appear to ignore those things which must, of necessity, occupy the greatest part of an ordinary mortal's thoughts, commend me to the preacher who has learned by experience what are human ties, and what is human worry."

(2.) *The pastor in his general social intercourse.*

Christianity favors the cultivation of the social principle; and the Christian pastor, above all men, cannot withdraw himself from the world; he cannot be exclusive; for he has devoted himself to the welfare of his fellow-men, and to the salvation of the world. Even as Christ looked on the multitudes of men, and had compassion upon them, so, wherever men are, there, like his Master, he is to do them good; and he cannot shut up the offer of the gospel and the hope of better things to any man, however low, obscure, and vile; for did not Christ attend the feast of one who was a publican and a sinner? We would, then, advise, (*a.*) that a minister should *be genuinely social, without conforming to the*

worldly spirit in society. The character of a minister should combine the spirit of faithfulness to God with faithfulness to man; he should not fail in his duties to either. There may be two opposite errors in ministerial conduct in regard to society: a minister may have so strong a desire to separate himself from worldly things and worldly men as entirely to lose the social spirit; or, on the other hand, he may have so intense a desire to smooth the way for good influence among all men, and to come down to the level and sympathy of all, that he may not only thereby lose his dignity, but may compromise his principles; and he may unconsciously adopt the principles of the world and of the evil there is in society. He may go so far as to come upon the ground of doing evil that good may come. The Saviour said of his disciples, "*They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world;*" yet he prayed that his disciples should not be taken out of the world, but kept from its evil. The middle course is thus the true one. While in the world, one should not be of the world; but he should show that religion is a principle strong enough to live in the world. If the minister surrenders too much, and suffers himself to be governed by the same principles that govern the world, so that he may have social intercourse with it, he gives no clear testimony to the divine spirit of his Master, neither will he be able, by this means, to raise society, but will himself be dragged down by it. Therefore we would give the counsel, (*b.*) that while the minister should *exhibit a genuine courtesy to all, he should have special attractions for the society and friendship of the true servants of Christ.* Although a minister should observe the customs of polite society, and may have friends whom he loves among the decidedly worldly class, yet a minister should cultivate no society where he is forced to hide his principles, or his sacred office, and appear to be what he is not.

Another suggestion is, (*c.*) that, though not a man of the

world, *a minister should be, wherever he is, a true gentleman.*

By his profession and education it is demanded of him that he should be a man of refinement. Anything coarse in a minister, even if his manners otherwise are of the plainest and simplest character, is inexpressibly out of place. John Wesley, plain and severe as we picture him, insisted upon the highest style of manners as necessary in the ministerial office — "all the courtesy of the gentleman, joined with the correctness of the scholar." "St. Paul," he said, "showed himself before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, one of the best bred men, one of the truest gentlemen, in the world." Paul was, indeed, if we could use such a comparison, as truly a gentleman, as Sir Philip Sidney. What a fine regard to the feelings of others he showed when he took the two Jewish Christians to the temple to perform their Nazarite vows!

The manners of Fénelon, so powerful for good with his age, are thus described by Lamartine in his Life of Fénelon: "Drawn toward all by his love, he drew all in turn to himself. The universal regard which he met with was but the rebound of that affection he displayed toward his fellow-creatures. This desire to please was no artifice; it was a spontaneous emotion. He did not, like the ambitious, exert it only when interest beckoned toward those who, by their friendship, could aid his advancement or his schemes; it extended to all." "Equally anxious," said St. Simon, "to delight his superiors, his equals, and his inferiors, in this desire of reciprocal love he recognized no distinctions of great or small, high or low; he sought only to conquer hearts with his own; he neglected none, and noticed even the humblest domestics of the palace. His politeness never seemed an attention to all, but a peculiar notice bestowed on each; it imparted its own character to his genius. He never sought to dazzle by display those who might have felt obscured or humiliated under the ascendency of his talents."

The good manners of Fénélon were indeed a Christian grace, the refinement of a pure heart, the expression of a Christ-like spirit. It is true that he studied to please; but there was nothing servile in the character of Fénélon; he showed himself at times an obstinately independent man.

Ministers who are not of this Pauline and Fénélon mould sometimes assume pompous and self-important manners; sometimes soft and overstrained manners; sometimes unnatural reserve and cold dignity of bearing; and sometimes brusque, harsh, imperious manners, which are all equally contemptible, and false types of the gentleman. The true gentleman acts sincerely, while at the same time he makes a study of the art of pleasing. Dr. Wayland's advice to a young friend was, "Never make an enemy." Perhaps this rule, or principle, might be amended by saying, "Never make an enemy except where truth demands this great sacrifice." An old English writer says, "Manner is something with all, and everything with some;" therefore even manner is not to be despised by him who is seeking to win men. The gospel is good will to men, and its minister should strive in small as well as in great things to show this good will to all; and while he should not seek to excel in the accomplishments of the dancing-master, he should take pains to perfect himself in the forms of good society, since it is quite certain that one who defiantly commits a breach of etiquette can have little power with well-bred people. A man may be awkward, stiff, and shy, but he must not be totally inattentive to the feelings of others if he means to do them good. The three points of clerical good manners are, dignity, gentleness, and affability. *Dignity* is opposed to frivolousness, or a constant tendency to unsteadiness of deportment, not to real cheerfulness or genial humor. It leads one to cultivate a manly self-command, which never permits him to become a mere joker or buffoon in company. Its prompts one to restrain an act, or a witticism, which compromises good feeling, good taste, or rever-

ence for sacred things. It leaves an impress of dignified repose on the very face and carriage, as if no low thing, or mean thing, could possibly come from such a man. An historian speaks of "the divine placidity of Bishop Butler's countenance."

Gentleness is the avoiding of undue harshness and severity in what one does and says; it is the soft answer that turneth away wrath; it is the conciliating mildness that wins, in opposition to the dogmatic, positive, passionate, and overbearing manner.

The apostle says that the pastor must be "gentle" (ἤπιον εἶναι πρὸς πάντας); and in this way he may instruct those that oppose themselves. This gentleness never descends into an unmanly servility, but by its unexacting modesty puts others at ease, and makes social intercourse pleasant and free. *Affability* is the opposite of an unchristian haughtiness, pride, and superciliousness; it is the genial warmth that melts all it comes in contact with; it goes out of the way sometimes to conciliate and win; it is attentive to every circumstance, and seeks to discover those particulars in which one can be of true service to another; it would bear and lighten another's burdens. The total want of this, and, on the contrary, a disagreeable acerbity of manner, some habit perhaps of saying censorious things, is often the whole source of a minister's unpopularity and failure.

We would offer, as another suggestion, (*d.*) that, in regard to social amusements, *a minister should exercise care to be, if possible, in no place or situation where his good may be evil spoken of.* We believe, in relation to this subject, as to all others, in the principle of Christian liberty, and that a minister has as much right to exercise this liberty as any other man; but there are places of amusement in which, if he does not feel that he himself would be injured by frequenting them, his presence would seem to be out of place, and would do more harm than good.

In regard to the whole subject of amusements, we hesi-

tate not to say that the world is made to be rationally enjoyed, as well as to be used for higher moral ends. The world, which we are warned in the Scriptures to avoid, is not the physical world, the green earth which sprang forth at the word of God, nor the world of natural affections, duties, cares, and joys into which we are born, but that moral world in which the spirit of evil reigns.

Enjoyment should be an element not thrust entirely outside of the Christian category; for many things in God's world are made to be rightly and innocently enjoyed, and one might say that it is a sin not to enjoy them.

There are also amusements which are not in themselves wrong, and harm has been done to the moral sense by ranking such amusements in the same category with absolutely wrong things, by calling them sins. Some kinds of amusement have been made harmful and corrupting by associations of evil with them: these may not be indulged in while they retain such associations, which leads to the appearance of evil. But how ample a field is open for rational recreation in the cheerful society of friends, in encounters of wit without malice, in the varied, grand, and beautiful fields of nature, in athletic exercises, in the rich domains of literature, poetry, and art! The true principle to guide us in the matter of amusements is, that they should be of a kind fitted to renew mind and body, and to prepare them for work.

Amusements are not the end, but only the means—the means of enabling men to do more and live better. Any amusement which unstrings the body and unfits the mind for their true work is only bad. But within just limitations a proper freedom should be allowed to one's people and one's self in such things, which, while it should never lead beyond the bounds of what is right, should not set up an artificial or false moral standard.

The mind needs some play—not merely variety of occupation, but, at times, complete relaxation; and temptation does not always lie in the careless mood of the mind, but

also in the thoughtful mood; envy, ambition, professional jealousy, and even more malignant vices, lurk in the overstrained and incessantly toiling mind, where the gentler virtues, sympathies, and affections have no place to live.

As another suggestion on this general topic of social relations, we would say, (*e.*) that it is well for the minister to strive in every proper way *to cultivate the social principle among his people, and in the community where he lives.* The first blow of Christianity is at individual, and the second at social, selfishness; it breaks up an unchristian exclusiveness, educates and sanctifies the social nature, draws out the affections and widens the sympathies of men. What, indeed, is the use of having a nature that can love our brother, if we never exercise this love, nor let our brother know that we love him? The pastor may become the means of making good people, whether rich or poor, cultivated or uneducated, better known to each other, of promoting the intercourse of families, and of fusing his flock together in pleasant social intercourse; and we cannot exaggerate the power of social influence for good or for evil, since society, as well as the individual, is to be Christianized.

We will add a few suggestions which come naturally under this general theme of social culture.

(*f.*) The cultivation of the power of *pithy, edifying conversation.* Conversational ability serves to bring others in communication with us, and to win their confidence; for if one can talk well about those things that interest another man, — business, educational matters, politics, — this may lead the way to something far more important. A minister, in his social intercourse with his people, may draw out their minds, and impart to them quickening knowledge upon all subjects, though this character of conversation, which merely imparts information, should not be the exclusive one. We call to mind a minister, an uncommonly well-informed man, who talked admirably on every imaginable subject; and though he, at first, won the hearts of his people by his con-

versational powers, he finally, it must be said, lost them in the same way. While making a pastoral visit, he would, for instance, take down a glass ornament from the mantel, and discourse, during his entire visit, and in a very instructive manner, on the art of glass-making, bringing out the most elaborate information; or he would take up a book from the centre-table, and give an interesting criticism, in fact, a lecture, upon its contents and its author; which was all very well: but by and by his people began to inquire, "Is our pastor never to say anything to us upon religious subjects?" Whether they wished him to do so or not, this really marked want in his conversation undermined his usefulness.

In the same manner an "anecdotal" (to use an Americanism) minister may be a very interesting and entertaining man; yet if he does nothing but tell good stories, he becomes wearisome; although it must be said that something of this personal and dramatic vein in conversation, this shrewd though genial appreciation of character, this pithiness of illustration, and power of minute detail, is an admirable quality in conversation; but if, in addition to this, or rather above and beyond this, there is no power to deal with principles and ideas, the conversation loses its ennobling, fructifying, edifying quality.

We have spoken of Fénelon's manners: his biographer speaks of his conversation. He says of it, "Adapted to the man, the hour, and the subject, it was grave, flexible, luminous, sublime, or playful, but always noble and instructive. In his most unstudied flights there was something sweet, kind, and winning. None could leave, or deprive themselves of the charm of, his society, without wishing to return to it again. His conversation left that impression on the soul which his voice left on the ear, and his features in the eyes — a new, powerful, and indelible stamp, which could never be effaced, either from the mind, the senses, or the heart. Some men have been greater, none have been more adapted to humanity, and none have been swayed more by the power of the affections."

The minister should cultivate, (*g.*) *simplicity of manner.* Again let us turn to Fénélon. How modest was his spirit! He said, "Those who are truly humble will be surprised to hear anything exalted of themselves. They are quiet, cheerful, obedient, watchful, fervent in spirit; they always take the lowest place, and consider every one superior to themselves; they are lenient to the faults of others in view of their own, and are very far from preferring themselves before any one." If all ministers cannot stoop so low as this, do they all share in this simple spirit, preferring lowness to exaltation? Do ministers assume nothing upon their being ministers? Dr. Chalmers, with all his intense love of politics, his Scotch sagacity, and his shrewd knowledge of men, had the simplicity of a little child — the simplicity of an entire absence of malice or vanity.

(*h.*) *The cultivation of a peaceable spirit.* Rom. 13 : 18, "*If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*"

"*And the servant of the Lord must not strive.*" Is there not a disputatious class of ministers? We do not refer to those who engage in manly discussion for the truth's sake: the Stoics had a saying, that even wise men might sometimes be at variance with each other in opinion; and so too, we might add, may good men also differ; but if a minister attempts to answer everything that is said to and about him, to oppose every petty assault upon him, to carry through every notion, fancy, or scheme, he will have his hands full. One's peaceableness should not, it is true, descend into acquiescence with actual injustice and wrong; for the time may come when a minister should fight, if not for his own rights, yet for the rights of others.

(*i.*) *The cultivation of a spirit of entire truthfulness.* Vinet quotes the example of the apostle Paul in this respect, whose tact at the same time in dealing with men no one would question. He says, "St. Paul deeply felt these truths. He testifies more than once that his conduct was

without artifice. (2 Cor. 4 : 2.) It rejoices him to say that in him there was no yea *and* nay. (2 Cor. 1 : 18.) He ventures to rebuke an apostle who did not walk uprightly. (Gal. 2 : 14.)" It is a bad thing for a minister to acquire the reputation of general want of candor; or of inaccuracy and looseness of statement; or of being a man who decorates what he says; or who regards victory more than truth; or who breaks his engagements easily; or who is culpably careless in small trusts; or whose word is not entirely and absolutely trustworthy. This saps, little by little, the tallest tower of ministerial reputation. While a minister's official hands are outwardly building up to heaven, his real character among men is secretly undermining his own work. He is the priest of Truth; let him not only light her fires on sacred solemnities, but let him not suffer the sacred flame to go out, for an instant, upon the altar of his own heart.

(*j.*) *The abhorrence of covetousness.* There is assuredly a true principle of self-interest, which, under proper restrictions, is right; but when this quality becomes inordinate, and grows into a selfish spirit which is continually on the watch for some advantage, some worldly gain, even in the sacred calling, — it is the temper of one whom the New Testament terms "*a hireling.*" This was the sin of Simon Magus, against whom the apostle flamed out in righteous indignation, saying, "*Thy money perish with thee;*" for his spirit of covetousness revealed a heart utterly opposed to the conception of the ministerial gift and work. The words of the apostle were especially addressed to the pastor: "*The love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith; but thou, O man of God, flee those things.*" "*A bishop must not be given to filthy lucre;*" and, hard as the saying is, a poor man (though not so much tempted to be so) can sometimes be equally covetous with a rich man; for it is not the fact of silver or gold, or property, — good things in them-

selves, — but the inward desire, the spiritual greed, which constitutes covetousness. The Pharisees were religious teachers, and strictly so, too, but it was said of them, that they were given to covetousness; and the covetous minister at this day will be drawn by this single passion into Pharisaism, both of doctrine and life; the leaven of the Pharisees will work in his whole nature, which is a deadly evil.

The great guiding principle of a minister's life, in relation to his people, is the spirit of the apostle's words (2 Cor. 12: 14), "*I seek not yours, but you.*"

As the care of the poor falls especially upon the pastor, he should, to the extent of his ability, be a man of open hand, and should give the tone to the spirit of benevolence among his people, being first in all good works.

Yet the pastor is by no means called upon to be an improvident man; he is to provide for his own; he has a right to live by the altar which he serves, and he is worthy of his hire. He should insist upon having a regular and sufficient salary, one paid in good currency, and not in the uncertain generosity of individuals. "*Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel;*" and the reasons for this are obvious: the work is a real work; it is the labor of hand and brain as much as any other; and it is not, too, without cost, for the minister must pay for his education, and he relinquishes the usual means of gain in order to devote himself to the ministry of the word; his position is an expensive one, and simple justice requires that he should be paid for his public services, like any other man who serves the public.

It must, however, be said of Protestant ministers in continental Europe, that, as a general rule, both in town and country, they live very simply and plainly, and therefore, in this respect, like the primitive pastors and ministers. Calvin, it is related by his biographers, kept house for about two hundred and fifty francs a year. We have seen it stated, and can partly confirm it by personal observation,

that the country Protestant ministers of Switzerland, France, and Germany frequently live in peasant cottages, with sanded floors, eating on boards without table-cloths, and sitting on bare wooden benches. Much of their living is obtained from their gardens, which they are accustomed to cultivate with their own hands. The very communion service used in their little parish churches sometimes consists of wooden plates and pewter cups. This may be a strongly drawn statement; but we mention it because, it may be, that in our land, in these later times, we, or some of us, have erred in the other direction — in not preserving a sufficient simplicity of living; and because the example of these ministers, who are, in many instances, university-educated men, and who yet choose to live like the humblest of their flocks, is a salutary and encouraging one to all. We believe, however, where the means allow, that good taste and refinement may be mingled with a simple and unostentatious method of domestic economy — the uniting, as Wordsworth said, "plain living and high thinking."

Finally, the unselfish spirit should prevail in all the intercourse and relations of life; and one should be willing himself to suffer rather than to exhibit selfishness toward others, as Pastor Harms said, "Better be the anvil than the hammer" — better take the hard blows one's self, than show a hard and exacting spirit toward other men.

§ 37. *Public Relations.*

The pastor of an American church does not belong merely to his own church, although his first duty is to it: he belongs also to the public. He is, in an eminent degree, a public man, upon whom, in a formative state of society like ours, much grave responsibility of a public nature necessarily falls. Vinet, though a European, held large ideas of the universal character of the pastoral office, and thought

that the Christian minister should be himself the type of a whole human life, even as Christian faith takes human life up and redeems it in every part and every function, and the entire man is made complete in Christ. The pastor should not shrink from these legitimate requirements of a public nature, when they do not interfere with more essential duties; and he should strive, in obedience to the great law of love to our neighbor, not only to build up single souls in Christ, but the community, and the state itself, into a higher life — into the life of a true Christian state. Let the minister, then, learn to cherish comprehensive views of his relations to all men, though not to the neglect of his primary duties to his own people. Let him cultivate the power of following out the wider relations of moral principles to their practical results in the country and in the world, studying the workings of ideas under the surface of society, and their effect upon the popular character; discovering the true bearings of ideas, and having boldness to meet those ideas in their social and public, as well as their more strictly personal and spiritual, aspects, to search them through in the light of human history, and of a true Christian philosophy. Let him not leave this field entirely open to the sway of false thinking, because it is not in a narrow view of the case precisely his own limited field of ministerial labor. He is to oppose error, and help to build broad and deep the foundations of a true Christian civilization, wherein all the interests of the Christian church are enshrined and conserved. If a minister ignores and surrenders this grand idea of the public good, he is apt to become a commonplace and second-rate man — a kind of parish priest.

1. As the discussion of the moral government of God does not confine itself to the science of theology, but looks to the application of the principles of truth, justice, order, love, — to every form of *human life*, *society*, and *government*, — the minister should not confine his

attention to the technically theological view of God's government, but should send his eye abroad to the actual condition of the world in its relations to the moral government of God, and ask where and how there may be, as far as human agency can effect it, improvement in the state of the world, or a better understanding and obedience of the great fundamental laws of society and government. It is, indeed, true that he who works in the realm of spirit — who labors to bring men into the kingdom and will of God — is doing the deepest work toward the general improvement of society and the world; but, in addition to that, direct efforts aimed at the prominent evils of society are called for from true men, and every moral and political reform should receive the minister's support, and at fit times from the pulpit; and he should give no unwilling, timid, or uncertain support. He should not cease maintaining a good cause, from the reason there may be men engaged in it with whom he cannot sympathize in strictly religious matters, or who make moral reform and "social science" their religion. The heterodox Samaritan, who did a deed of charity to his neighbor, was approved above the orthodox Levite.

As the Christian pastor is a leader (ἡγούμενος) of men, he owes the state a more marked, prompt, and high-toned service than other men; and he should let it be known that he does, and does intentionally, carry his religion into his duties as a man and a citizen. The minister is to show what political atheism would be delighted to disprove — that Christianity is beautifully adapted to the highest state of civilization which can be attained, and is, in fact, the germinal principle of such a civilization.

Therefore the minister should, in a country like this, not be unmindful of the power of *public opinion*, and should seek to influence that opinion for good as far as he can, and to salt with truth the springs of influence, which go to vitalize the state as well as the individual.

Nevertheless, it is true that Christianity does not assume,

as yet, the entire control of public affairs. It comes as an independent force into the world, and must work its way along with other forces, until, by the manifestation of its superiority and divinity, it obtains the mastery of affairs. Thus the minister of Christianity should be content to work patiently in a humble way, and should not be arrogant in asserting the claims of his religion. Christianity works from within outward, so that undeniably its prime method of progress is to bring the single soul, or will, into the dominion of the will of God, and by thus making it an agent of subduing other wills to God, acts as a hidden leaven in society and the world. The minister should not be a public man, and a leader of public opinion, and nothing else; his faith must be still in the secret, viewless, mighty power of God, operating in harmony with the truth; and he must rest on God as the real reforming power in the world, and not lose heart or hope when a human theory of progress fails. God is more concerned to work righteousness and bring about the triumph of truth in the world than the best man is; and God should be the spring of our strength and effort in all genuine movements for the public good. A minister should under no circumstances become a demagogue, who mounts upon a current of popular excitement to increase his personal popularity or power; for such a man pollutes his office, and is ruled by the people ultimately, instead of ruling them; or he is apt to make some enormous blunder, which reacts disastrously upon his own reputation and good influence. A minister should keep these public questions subordinate to truth and higher spiritual interests, and people should not get the idea that he is more interested in such public questions than in those higher questions of truth and duty that lie behind them — in fact, in the gospel. He should strive to infuse the new spirit of the gospel into human society, and it should be for this purpose, and this purpose alone, that he descends into the arena of public affairs. He

is the friend of humanity; he is to preach Christ in his vast and varied relations to human law and life, and, like the "prophet" of old, he is to pursue wrong fearlessly in high places and low, to tear away its mask, and to set forth the right as clear as the sun.

2. As the interests of religion and education go together; as true knowledge is the knowledge of the truth, and springs from God; and as faith itself, up to a certain point, is constantly turning into knowledge, — therefore it is the responsibility of the Christian minister to set Christ as the heart of the *educational* as well as the spiritual world, as "*the light of the world*." There is a ceaseless struggle going on here. There is a powerful element in the world, and in our land, opposed to the supernatural claims of the Christian faith, whose effort is to obtain control of every source of influence, and especially of that immense spring of power which is comprehended in the education of the land; for men well know that they who educate the nation govern the nation. The minister of the higher light and truth should not slumber at his post; and though pressed for time, he should not shun positions which yield him opportunity to exert some shaping influence upon public education.

Under this theme we might speak of a minister's connection with the press and the general world of letters, which we have done in another relation, and which is an unlimited field of public influence. A minister should, in some part of his life, expect to do good through his pen, even if it may be outside of the field of theological literature. If he has any peculiar intellectual taste, whether for literature or science, should he leave it uncultivated? Some ministers have been successful in the field of science, and sovereigns in the realm of literature. Not only such great men as Jeremy Taylor, Robert Hall, Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Arnold, will preach through their writings to all coming time, but many of our living American ministers are doing much to infuse a better spirit into the courses of literature, and are writing good books

on all subjects. After the first strain of his professional duties is passed, a minister may begin to write for the religious press; only let him guard against the passion of seeing himself in print. "Never," said Leigh Hunt, "draw up the curtain until you feel pretty certain that you have something to show in the window."

3. *Artistic, industrial, and agricultural interests* — everything, in fact, that improves and humanizes society — should not lie altogether outside of a Christian pastor's attention and sympathy. He should do his share — and it is a large one — to form a society in which all the faculties, activities, and affections of men, may be developed from the central principle of the love of God through the regenerating power of Christ's spirit, so that, in some faint degree, the society of earth may resemble the society of heaven.

PART FOURTH.

THE PASTOR IN HIS RELATIONS TO THE CHURCH.

FIRST DIVISION.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

§ 38. *Theory and Form of Public Worship.*

The relations of the pastor to the church and to the people of his care, which form the pith and marrow of his office, and compared with which all else is subordinate, — this theme naturally resolves itself into two main parts.

Public worship and the *care of souls.*

The first of these — *public worship* — has reference to the stated and regular service of God, or the external religious *cultus*, where the whole congregation of Christian people are brought together for the solemn praise and worship of God. The duties and functions of the Christian ministry are so intimately connected and entwined with this, that it is necessary to discuss it with some little care.

1. There is a necessity in our nature to express religious feelings in some outward manner; to manifest, in some appropriate external way, the sentiment of reverence and adoration toward God. This principle of representation,

united with the social element in man, which impels him to a fellowship with others even in his most devotional acts, leads to public worship. Worship is not precisely religion itself, but it is *the expression of the religious sentiment in an act that comprehends the offering up of the whole man, body, soul, and spirit, to God.* All parts of our complex nature enter into this act, and all of them are fitly represented in the great common act of public worship. Thus, the bodily nature is represented by the actual presence in the house of God, by the attitude of devotion, and by the outward ordinance which appeals to the bodily eye and sense. This is that *symbolic* element in worship to which belong the external form and method of devotion.

There is also the emotional part of the nature, which enters profoundly into public worship, the rendering up of the spiritual sensibilities and affections to God, the expressing of itself in the penitential confession, the sacred lyric, and the adoring prayer: this forms the purely *liturgical* element in worship — that which is vitally essential to its life and fervor. Genuine feeling is the soul of worship, and, above all, the feeling of dependent trust and affectionate devotion toward God, the true "*sursum corda*" of the primitive church. We can, indeed, think of many other things which come into, and must come into, Christian worship; but if the *heart* is wanting, all is wanting. The intellect and conscience, it is true, enter largely into Christian worship; but worship, in its inmost sense, is not intellectual instruction, nor is it the active operation, at the time, of the moral sense, — i. e., doing acts of duty or benevolence, — but it is the lifting up of the heart to God in humble, penitent, joyful adoration.[1] It is the expression of the love and willing service of God, and of readiness and yearning to receive spiritual gifts from him. The heart of the worshipper must

[1] Hagenbach's Liturgik und Homiletik, c. i. § 3.

be brought into this fit state to receive blessings from God. It should be in a receptive as well as active state; indeed, it might be, in part, in a purely passive condition — one of love, faith, trust; one able to receive as well as to give.

And again, the intellectual, or the rational nature including both the conscience and will, has its appropriate place in the solemn act of public worship: this is the *didactic* element, that leads the soul into truth, and builds it up in the spirit and life of Christ. Vinet, quoting from Harms, says that "*preaching* is only an accidental adjunct of worship, not an integral part of it." We cannot agree to that, and we should prefer to take the larger view of worship which has already been given, and which implies the engaging of all the faculties and powers of the being, rational as well as emotional, in the one comprehensive act of consecration and praise to God. Protestants rightly view preaching the word as a main part of Christian worship, and Protestants should not, therefore, lose sight of the fact that preaching *is* worship; that God, and not the human preacher, is the great end of preaching; that preaching itself is but a part of the praise of God. Preaching, as an element of public worship, is a thing very different from the popular address or lecture upon any ethical theme, however useful it may be. Preaching has certain features which constitute its proper relations to the worship of God's house, which make it also an act of praise, and which do not permit it to stand isolated as a mere effort of the human mind, or a pure expression of thought. True worship is, indeed, the edifying or building up of the people in all Christian faith and godliness; but it does this *by leading them to God*, in prayer, song, reading the Scriptures, and preaching; by developing the divine life, the real Christian feeling, the true spirit of Christian love, that is in the people. It is bringing out this consciousness of the life of God and Christ that exists in the souls of the congregation, giving expression to this, and thus warming

into new growth and activity every power and quality of the Christian life.

True worship makes better Christians, purer, more self-sacrificing and courageous workers in all good things, because the heart has been kindled by contact with the heart of Christ. In the same way, preaching to save the souls of the impenitent finds its highest impulse in the praise and glory of God, that those darkened and silent spirits may, by the renewing spirit of Christ given to them, break their chains of sin, and join in the universal song of praise that goes up from holy hearts to the blessed Lord and Redeemer of our nature. This deep inter-relation of preaching to the whole idea of divine worship is, we think, a very important one, and settles many questions in regard to the subject-matter, style, length, manner, and entire character of the sermon in the public services of the sanctuary.

Lastly, and above all, the more purely *spiritual* element should not be wanting. This is the drawing out of the highest nature of man in the adoration of God, raising man to a participation with God in spiritual things, and promoting a real and present union with Christ. This is that inner soul-element which constitutes true spiritual worship, as contradistinguished from all merely human, formal, ritual, and external worship; which, in fine, fulfils the words of the Saviour when he said, "*But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.*" This is the worship which Christ himself and his disciples rendered to the Father of all mercies, and which now, in the name and through the faith of the Son of God, is rendered by true believers, the world over, to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This conception of public worship which has been set forth, which summons the varied nature of man to a high and joyful act of praise, and consecrates his entire being, body and soul, as a reasonable offering to God, meets, we believe, the highest Christian consciousness, as we find it developed

in the New Testament, and in the history and worship of the Christian church.

None of the elements which have been mentioned should be wanting in the great common act of public worship; all should have their proper place, and the loss of even one of them would seriously impair the unity, beauty, and truth of their worship. Without the outward form of devotion, we run into the subjective and inexpressive idea of worship, which tends to degenerate into no-worship, and evaporates in silence and nonentity. In the absence of the emotional or more purely devotional element, the worship becomes lifelessly formal or fatally rationalistic, for the external form is meaningless without the spirit which gives it life; so that if a man goes to church with the sole idea of gaining instruction, of having doubtful points cleared up, and he obtains no new light on the dark things of truth, he might very well say, "It would be as well for me to stay at home; I have books written by master minds; I get no food here." Yet if, on the other hand, the didactic element were taken away, the worship would sink into bald ritualism; not a ray of the divine intelligence would shine through it, and, for all power to help a soul to rise to God, it would be "*as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.*"

2. We have thus set forth the general theory of public worship, let us now look for a moment at its actual *form* and expression. This outward form, where it does not embrace actual error, is, we hold, left substantially to the choice and regulation of the church; therefore we think it profitable to inquire into all legitimate sources of power, interest, fervor, and truth in public worship.

There can be no doubt that the more spiritual the church, is the less need it has of outward forms of worship; yet even that principle cannot be carried too far, for in heaven, where it is supposed that forms will not be needed, there is represented to be something like form, harmony, and com-

munion in worship. The four and twenty elders give praise to the Lord God Almighty; the hundred and forty and four thousand sing the new song, and the harpers join with them; there is a definite theme of praise, and a definite number who sing and praise together. Now, if this is an image given us of the praise and worship of heaven, it would seem as if some form were needed for those who still possess human bodies, associations, and sympathies, and who are creatures of time and place.

The great question, then, is, — and the pastor, who is the leader of the worship, is especially interested in it, — How much of outward form is required in the public worship of God?

The general testimony of the New Testament is assuredly in favor of simple forms of worship — of the simplest framework necessary to sustain the tender plants of devotion, lest they be trampled in the mire of common things. But, still, in the New Testament itself there is evidence of a considerable variety in the matter of form, and the whole subject of public worship was evidently left pretty much to the needs and will of the churches, or of those who presided over them. But toward the close of the apostolic period, we have the fact clearly developed, that there *was* something like a regularly organized public service of God, consisting of distinct parts, as in our public service at this day; and special directions are given in the later Epistles respecting the order of the exercises, the whole course of public worship, and the conduct of the persons engaged in it. In the writings, both sacred and profane, immediately succeeding the apostolic age, the same fact is confirmed, down to the period when form usurped the place of spirit, and worship became a corrupt externalism. But we will not go over the historical ground; we would only say a word in regard to the *Lord's Supper*, which has been sometimes thought to be the historic germ of Christian public worship. This, we think, can hardly be so; for there is strong proof that when the

Lord's Supper was celebrated every time Christians met together, and every day by the church of Jerusalem, it was then connected with the "Agapæ" or "Feasts of Love," and was not, therefore, strictly to be considered as forming a part of divine worship; but it was rather a feast of Christian love and friendship, in which Christ formed one — a simple continuation of the first supper, only it recognized Christ in a more formal manner, as the real bond of love and fellowship. We do not think that any argument can be drawn from this that the Lord's Supper ought to be looked upon as the originating cause of Christian worship, or that it should be celebrated every Sunday. The historian Cave, it is true, takes the ground that the growing laxity in celebrating the Lord's Supper, first every Sabbath, then every month, then every two months, is evidence of the decline of faith in the primitive church; but even in Justin Martyr's day we find that the Lord's Supper was already separated from the "Feasts of Love," and did not, therefore, form the direct object or occasion of every assemblage of Christians, whether for social purposes or public worship. This idea, however, seized upon by the Romish church, of clustering everything about the Eucharist, has led to the Romish Mass, and, in fact, to the whole vast system and structure of the Roman Catholic church. The Lord's Supper is, undoubtedly, the highest and tenderest act of Christian public worship; but it is not the only, nor even the seminal, act of all Christian public worship, nor do we believe that our Lord would wish it to be so regarded.

Some kind of formal worship is, then, to be regarded as necessary; for even Quakers admit this by their coming together in regular places of solemn assembly, and every Christian body, or denomination, has its regular form of public worship, just as truly as the Roman Catholics have theirs. Our Congregational worship is as much a form as that of any other Christian body, only a much simpler form; and in many instances we ourselves have come to have

fixed forms of words, though taken from the Bible, as in our benedictions, and formulas for baptism and the Lord's Supper. There is, indeed, a strong tendency in our very prayers to run into set forms of words, showing that there is a certain under-current toward permanent methods of expression even in the freest systems of public worship.

The question next arises, What kind of formal worship (humanly speaking) is best adapted to meet the true ends of worship; to produce, sustain, and develop the spirit of praise, and the feeling of true devotion and adoration?

There are three great principles, drawn from our mental constitution, that should enter into the act of Christian public worship, viz., *order*, *freedom*, and *union*, or communion. The first of these, *order*, is not only a natural, but a spiritual principle. While we continue to be imperfect and semi-sensual beings, there should be, surely, for such imperfect creatures, the orderly and invariable element in worship; and even with perfect spiritual beings in heaven there seems to be the grand law of order. This is the same principle that manifests itself in the regular recurrence of the "Lord's day," in the periodic celebration of the Lord's Supper, in the repetition of the formal order of service, whatever it may be, in the rehearsing of the doxology and benediction. Liturgical churches have certainly appreciated this simple law of our mental being, — order, uniformity, — and made more of it than we do. Their form of worship is a fixed quantity. Might we not also make more use of this important principle? Might we not avail ourselves more than we do of the rich treasures of what is old, — of praise, prayer, and song, gathered through the centuries of the church's history, — and not have the desire so strongly, and often so painfully, excited, to produce what is new and varied at every service? There should be in every form of worship, however simple, some permanent basis; something of the old, of the familiar, of the invariable; some worn path way for the feet of worshippers to tread in. The second

great principle is that of *freedom*, or spontaneity, which is the peculiar glory and beauty of our own form of worship, and which is an essential element of true worship. It is a chief source of its life and power. Where there is no freedom of intercourse with God, no individuality of thought or desire, no opportunity for the expression of present want, sorrow, temptation, thankfulness, then how can there be living truth in worship, or real communion established between God and the soul? The third principle is *union*, or communion — in a word, the social principle, which cannot for a moment be lost sight of in the great common act of public worship. When we worship by ourselves, the more solitary we are, the better; and we should "shut to the door" and be alone with "our Father which seeth in secret;" but when a multitude worship together in the common name of Christ, the principle of individualism should merge itself into the higher principle of Christian love and communion. All that tends to unite many hearts in one act, to make them flow together in one devotional channel, aids true worship. It is here, perhaps, that the greatest want of our Congregational form of worship is sometimes felt; for even in the sanctuary of our common Lord we are apt to remain too independent of each other, too individual, too much broken up into separate fragments. One member remains unpenetrated by the feeling which glows in the heart of his next neighbor, and the whole mass is not sufficiently fused together and made one.

Our public religious services are generally interesting and profitable in a rational point of view, but frequently they are cold, and apparently undevotional. It is often with us the idea of the knowledge of God, rather than of the love of God, or of one another. It is the idea of edification rather than that of praise. We are not saying that there is not as much of pure devotion in our worship as in that of any other body of Christian believers; but we are noticing what might be called some of our deficiencies, in

order to draw the thought and attention of those who are coming on the stage, as Christian pastors, to this important subject, and to the remedy of these deficiencies, if remedy there is to be found. Vinet says, "As for us, our worship is too much a confession of faith — a discourse; everything is articulate, everything is precise, everything explains itself. The effect of this tendency has gone so far as to determine the idea we have formed of temples. We regard temples as a place for hearing. We go to them to hear some one speak."[1] He says again, "Preaching has its place under the gospel, but it does not suffocate worship. Our word is a prism which decomposes the light."[2] He means by this, we suppose, that preaching is analytic, and addressed principally to the intellect; whereas he would have more of simplicity of feeling, contemplation, and trust, in worship. As to the worship of the primitive church, Vinet says, "It seems to have been a medium between preaching and devotion. We see in it nothing of the anxious precision of a confession of faith, nothing of the profusion of rites of the Romish church."[3] These quotations show that in the worship of the reformed Swiss and French churches — very closely resembling our own — something of the same want is evidently experienced. This is a profoundly practical question, for the church of our fathers is suffering from the fact, that men of culture and undoubted piety sometimes declare that their sympathies and tastes are not wholly met by our form of worship, and hence they feel that they cannot develop themselves or their spiritual life with perfect freedom within our system. It is easy to say, in regard to such, "Let them go; they are not of us, and never can be;" but all kinds of minds should be considered, and their wants, as far as possible, kindly appreciated.

It is possible for us, we think, to profit from whatever of good there is in other forms of worship, even the most

[1] Pastoral Theology, p. 180. [2] Ib., p. 182. [3] Ib., p. 181.

diverse from our own, without losing our distinctive characteristics, or believing, with Dr. South, that there is but one prayer lacking in the Book of Common Prayer; and that is, that the Prayer Book should continue to be used in public worship forever!

It is sometimes said by us, and oftener, perhaps, thought, that there can be little of true worship under liturgical forms, because they are nothing but forms; yet devout members of liturgical evangelical churches can doubtless maintain the genuine attractions of that form of worship from some such reasons as these — that their liturgy is fitted to meet the religious sympathies of all classes of worshippers, as presenting an embodiment of the great truths of the Christian faith, such as the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection, repentance, forgiveness — which hold up those truths plainly to the view of all, so as to enkindle religious feelings; and that in the regular recurrence of these words of faith, and of petitions for common wants, both temporal and spiritual, there is devotional power. Here is the law of uniformity of which we have spoken. We talk of how touching are old hymns, and of the influence of familiar words of the Bible, and of the moving nature of old scenes and places; and in the same way devout feeling runs along more easily in familiar words of prayer and praise.

Then there is the social element in such worship, — the diffusion of the social principle, — which gives all something to do, by uniting all the congregation in the responses and singing. We have no doubt that many pious minds do more readily worship God in the channels of these liturgical forms, when they have been educated from childhood in them, than *they* could in our mode, or in any simpler mode. We are also equally open to see the marked deficiencies of those methods of worship. The liturgical part of the service is usually too long, especially in the English church, where, in the morning, there are, as it were, three services in one. That does not allow time for the faithful

preaching of the word. It thrusts it into a corner. It makes it a subordinate thing. Then, too, the absence of the spontaneous element is an almost fatal defect. This gives little opportunity for spiritual growth, for the expression of new truth, or fresh feeling, and for the satisfying of the present emergency. It fixes the mind on the past — on the faith of the founders of the church, or of the makers of the liturgy. It tends to narrow the religious life, and to lead it to feel the want of no more religion than can be found in the forms of prayer. And there is, above all, the temptation to rest in the written form, and to think that when the prescribed words of devotion are uttered, and the service gone through with, one has truly worshipped, and the duty is accomplished — that one has done his devotions. As a matter of taste, also, while the responses and chants are extremely devotional, and have, moreover, the authority of great antiquity (even Justin Martyr himself speaks of an ancient litany being responded to by the people), the practice of alternate readings of the Scriptures is confusing; nevertheless, may we not at least study with profit liturgical forms of worship for propriety, dignity, solemnity, the rich flavor of antiquity, and the social element?

This is not the place, nor have we space, to take up the actual question as to the best methods of increasing the life, interest, and fervor of our worship, and of supplying its more marked deficiencies. Other churches besides our own have felt the same difficulties; and some efforts have been made to meet them. Here and there, for example, a Presbyterian church has introduced a liturgical form; and it might consistently do so, for the Presbyterian worship was, at one time, liturgical; the prayer book of Edward VI. was anciently used in Scotland, and by John Knox himself, with some modifications permitted by Archbishop Cranmer; and at the time of the Restoration, leading Presbyterian divines — among them Richard Baxter — presented an address to the throne, to the purport that they were satis-

fied that a liturgy might be used, if it were conformable to the word of God, and were not too rigorously imposed. This was assented to, and an equal number of Presbyterians and Episcopalians were appointed to consider the matter; and the prayer book, as amended at that time, actually passed the English Parliament, and came very near being adopted by the Presbyterian church in England, and afterward in America.

Something similar to a liturgy has likewise been introduced into many Congregational churches in this country and in England; but although Congregational churches would have perfect liberty to adopt a liturgy if they chose to do so, yet it must be said that, historically speaking, a written and prescribed liturgy seems to be opposed to the original form and spirit of the Congregational church.

In Elizabeth's reign, the worship, as well as the polity, of the church, of all bodies of the church, even of the Puritan body at that time, was liturgical. The original Puritans, though opposed to Popish rites and ceremonies, were not opposed to prescribed forms of public prayer. The ground they took was this, as set forth in these formal objections to the English Established church (Neal's History of the Puritans, Part I. p. 106): "Fifthly, Though they did not dispute the lawfulness of set forms of prayer, provided a due liberty was allowed for prayers of their own composure before and after sermon, yet they disliked some things in the public liturgy established by law; as the frequent repetition of the Lord's prayer, the interruption of the prayers by the frequent responses of the people, which, in some places, seem to be little better than vain repetitions, and are practised by no other Protestant church in the world;" and also (Part I. p. 122) in the apology of two prominent Puritan divines, who were imprisoned for non-conformity. "Concerning public worship, we hold that there ought to be places appointed for this purpose, and that there may be a prescript form of prayer and service in the known tongue,

because all have not the gift of prayer; but we would not have it patched out of the pope's prescriptions; but be the form of prayer never so good, we affirm that ministers may not think themselves discharged when they have said it over, for they are not sent to say service, but to preach deliverance through Christ: preaching, therefore, must not be thrust out of doors for reading. Neither ought ministers so to be tied to a prescript form of prayer that at all times he must be bound, of necessity, to use it; for who can draw a form of prayer necessary for all times, and fit for all congregations? We deny not that there be various manners of prayers, but we must take heed that they be not long and tedious; wherefore preaching, as it is the chief part of a minister's office, so all other things must give place to it."

The true Congregationalists, who broke off from the great Puritan body, who were "the Puritans of the Puritans," and from whom we in New England were descended, went, as it seems to us, farther than this, and made a point on this very matter of using prescribed forms of prayer, although we do not find it laid down in so many words in any definite formula or standard of the Congregational church.

In giving an account of English Independency, Neal says (Part IV. p. 492), "Their method of public worship in Holland was the same with other Protestants: they read the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in their assemblies, and expounded them on proper occasions; they offered up public and solemn prayers for kings and all in authority; and though they did not approve of a prescribed form, they admitted that public prayer in their assemblies ought to be framed by the meditation and study of their ministers, as well as their sermons." The distinguished Independent minister Barrowes argued eloquently against set forms of prayer; and this same Henry Barrowes and John Greenwood, Cambridge graduates and conspicuous

Congregationalists, were imprisoned on the specific charge of opposition to the prayer book as a form of public worship.

Cotton Mather, in his *Ratio Disciplinæ* (p. 46–52), says, "The New England churches have no liturgy composed for them, much less imposed upon them; our Saviour and his apostles never provided any prayer book but the Bible for us. The first planters hoped that the second coming of our Saviour will arrive before there will be received among them any *liber officialis* (book of authority) but the sacred Scriptures." John Cotton also reasoned against liturgies, or "stinted and set forms of prayer."

Early Congregationalists acted on the principle that everything that was not required by the Scriptures was in the nature of "will-worship," as they termed it. They undoubtedly carried that too far; but it goes to show what primitive Congregationalism really was. We, surely, are not bound rigidly to carry out to the letter all the ideas and usages of the Congregational fathers, since they were but men; but can we adopt an essentially liturgical form of worship, and remain true historical Congregationalists? Congregationalism was, in its origin, a protest against human prescription and formalism in religious things, and it had no written form of worship any more than it had a written creed or church polity; and whatever written forms it now has are merely the collected memorials and precedents of the usages of the churches. It is, in spirit, an entirely free system, and no written form in any particular, not even one forbidding liturgical worship, can be pointed out as ruling over the freedom of the churches. It would seem, then, that we must come unavoidably to these general conclusions: that our present Congregational form of worship, simple as it is, is a true historic *cultus;* also, that, as nothing human is perfect, our form of worship, like others, may, in some respects, be incomplete; may lack some subordinate elements of power; may still be open, here

and there, to improvement, or, at least, to development, without at the same time losing its distinctive characteristics.

And the final question then comes: Is there no way, in harmony with its own history and spirit, by which our system of worship may supply its deficiencies, enrich its barrenness, round out and complete its simple ritual, give unity, fulness, and vitality to its public worship of God, not in an æsthetic sense merely, or as lending outward attractiveness, but as affording a true medium to the spiritual devotion of the people? In other words, the question is, whether, in an essentially unliturgical form of worship, the elements of power, truth, and beauty, that a liturgical form may possess, cannot be equally secured, and the evils which are wrapped up in a liturgical form be, at the same time, avoided? This is the interesting and difficult question, which — in the presence of an advancing civilization, of a more general cultivation of the æsthetic sense, of the power of the *human* element, which is making itself more and more felt in religious things, of the lowering of the high tone of primitive piety, or its assuming of other phases that are apparently a decay of the highest spiritual life — the Congregational churches of New England and the West are to meet and work out.

We believe that improvements will be made, if made at all, in our form of worship, not by hastily introduced novelties which obtain no general introduction into the churches, but by changes that come from the development of true liturgical principles, and that rest on enlarged ideas of religious wants in worship. Without being able to enter into this question, we would venture to offer a few simple suggestions, having reference chiefly to pastors, which might, in the mean time, go a little way to supply defects, and to fill up some of the felt deficiencies of our Congregational worship.

(1.) Pastors, in whose hands the public devotions are so

exclusively left, should receive *a more thorough liturgical preparation*, and should diligently cultivate themselves in that respect. The culture of the spirit of devotion, and of the gift of fit expression in prayer, is a necessary part of a minister's qualifications, as a leader of public prayer. He should deeply meditate upon the best forms of public prayer. He should study the oldest liturgies of the church. He should avail himself of them, and endeavor to catch something of their earnest spirit. He should endeavor to infuse more of the rich devotional element into all the public service of God. He should feel himself to be simply a servant, an aider of the people in religious things, keeping to himself his individualities, and striving to have the spiritual element, the divine element, predominate in the public services. In the wording of his prayer, the choice and reading of hymns, the selections from Scripture, the general oversight of the church music, and in all things relating to the more strictly devotional part of the service, he should make a careful preparation, full as much so as for his sermon. He may thus form a liturgy that shall combine order with freedom, simplicity with fervor.

(2.) *The cultivation of a reverential spirit in the people.* The inward spirit of devotion is the principal thing; but whatever tends to increase this spirit should be carefully regarded, especially among young people. Even the outward form of devotion in the house of God; the guarding against all irreverent acts or looks; the devout attention given to all parts of public service; the idea manifesting itself in every way that it *is* a great thing to come into the presence of God, and worship him; the respect shown to holy things, — even these external matters should be duly cared for.

There should be more attention paid by the congregation to a uniform reverent posture in the house of God, all standing (as was the ancient Christian custom on Sunday) during prayer, or else all kneeling or bowing, and the avoidance of all indecent haste in concluding any service,

and in leaving the sanctuary. In connection with this, a pure and sanctified taste in all that relates to the house of God itself should not be considered as useless. Worship is not, indeed, "one of the fine arts," any more than preaching, or religion is, but worship should clothe itself in the most appropriate and beautiful forms.

(3.) *The cultivation of the social principle in worship.* Everything that has a tendency to increase the social spirit, and to produce real Christian communion, should be promoted; and perhaps nothing is more potent than music — than *congregational singing* — to bring souls into harmony. The responsive reading of the Psalms, as constituting the most ancient scriptural liturgy, has been commended for the purpose of harmonizing the congregation in worship — of giving them a part to perform in the service, and of awakening a deeper glow of devotional feeling.

There may be also the judicious introduction of chorals, and the chanting of psalms, to increase the legitimate attractions of public worship and the spirit of devotion.

(4.) The reading, as in the primitive church, *of more, and of the more devotional portions, of the Bible* — of the Psalms, and the prophets, and the spiritual parts of the Old Testament; and added to this the practice of a simple, *spiritual style of preaching*, filled with the spirit of Christ, so that *this* may be also a devotional part of public worship — that it may have for its end to awaken in the soul the supreme affection for God.

(5.) *The revival of pure faith*, the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, which would bring into our churches a new spirit of consecration, of joy in the worship of God, of delight in his praise.

§ 39. *The Sanctuary.*

We have spoken generally of the theory and form of public worship, but something of a more particular character

seems needful to be said in relation to the offices of the "house of God," where the pastor, on every "Lord's day," conducts the public services of his flock; for he is not only the instructor of their consciences, but the leader of their devotions. We are obliged to omit the discussion of the "*Lord's day*" itself; and also, for want of space, we must pass over the consideration of the fit administration of the *Sacraments*, which are, in some very interesting aspects, true rites of worship. We would lay down, for pastoral suggestion and guidance, two or three simple principles in regard to the *character of the sanctuary services*, although they may seem to repeat what has been already said.

(1.) *They should be regularly held in one place.*

This is in harmony with the laws of our nature, and not inconsistent with the Scriptures.[1] Although a superstitious reverence for places is done away by Christianity, and the temple is the soul itself, yet the regular local sanctuary is both needful and in accordance with Christian precedent from the earliest times until now.[2] When we are on a journey, or at war, we can worship in a tent, or under a green tree; but at home we require a religious as well as a domestic sanctuary. It is the pastor's duty, as far as he can have any control in this, to see that the sanctuary is a place proper for the public worship of God; that it is not used for secular purposes; that it is at least neat and commodious; and that, according to the means of the people, it is attractive and in good taste.

If a new house of worship is to be built, and if the people are able to incur the expense without incurring a debt, it should be, we think, whether large or small, a solid, permanent structure, — better of stone, — in order that the hallowing associations of ages may cluster about it. It should be well suited for the purposes of public worship, of seeing and

[1] Deut. 12 : 1–7; John 18 : 2; Acts 2 : 1; 1 Cor. 11 : 20.

[2] Pliny's letter. See Mosheim's History of Christianity of the First Three Centuries, vol. i. p. 125.

hearing well, of aiding, not destroying, the sympathy which should exist between preacher and people; and, these conditions fulfilled, it ought to be in good taste architecturally, for it is a school wherein to educate the sentiments, as well as to instruct the conscience. The Gothic architecture may, possibly, hereafter be surpassed and superseded by some other style; but as an ecclesiastical architecture, combining the impression of sacred awe with a certain vagueness that belongs to spiritual ideas, it has not yet been equalled. It can be modified and adapted to the purposes of Protestant worship; and as it sprang originally from a religious idea, and all its lines point upward and carry the thoughts with them, it seems, in an æsthetic point of view, better fitted for educational purposes, than the horizontal, low, and earth-bound lines of classic architecture; but this is purely a matter of taste. It is altogether a secondary matter; for "The God that made the world and all things that are therein, the same being already Lord of heaven and earth, settleth not down in hand-made temples."[1] The building of exceedingly costly and elaborately architectural churches, of imitation-cathedrals, by our own denomination, is, we think, uncalled for. It is contrary to our spirit and our simple ritual, and it reveals no settled principle, nor true conception of religious art, whose whole beauty consists in adaptation to the idea, the design, and the place; for beauty here has a vital relation to religious wants. We believe that the time will come when true art, of whatever kind, will find its free place and proper use, in Christian worship and faith, as a humble but beautiful handmaid of religion.

The house should be built and paid for by voluntary subscription, chiefly of the wealthy; and if a community is abundantly able to build such a good, ample, solid, and chastely-beautiful edifice, for the use of both rich and poor, it should surely do so; it should furnish a fit and commodious

[1] Conybeare and Howson's translation.

sanctuary for the benefit of all classes, and with a low rental of seats. It should not be a place for the rich alone, for "a fashionable church," as it is called, is "an abomination to the Lord;" but it should be a place for rich and poor to sit together, and for the poor to feel a right to be there, because they, too, bear some small part of the expense, or have an opportunity to pay a low rent within their means. This system, combining good taste and permanence with cheapness and reasonableness in the price of seats, is better than very costly churches exclusively for the rich, with mission chapels for the poor; or than entirely free churches; or than big "tabernacles," which require a rare popular orator to fill them, and which, unfilled, are wastes of solitude.

The glory of a church is to be full — full of glad worshippers; and the most beautiful symbolism, the most fit external forms, are dead, and worse, if they are not aids and expressions of true spiritual life. Therefore, if necessary, rather than that the church should not be full, Christians should go out into the highways and hedges, and gather in the poor and the outcast. The spirit of Christianity is to *seek* such, not to wait for them to seek Christianity, or to come to the church, which they never will do. Within the church itself, the seats of honor, if there are such, should be given to the aged and to the "elders" of the church; or the congregation should be ecclesiastically, not pecuniarily, arranged. The church and society should be brought to feel (and the pastor's responsibility lies here) that a selfish property interest in the sanctuary, as in a warehouse, is an unchristian sentiment — that the sanctuary is for the good of all, and belongs to all; and there should be an earnest desire that all should be provided with good seats, even to the inconvenience of some. Christians should let it be understood that their church, be it in town or country, is the religious home of the whole community, of all who wish to come — that there are no places in it to be un-

occupied. Let the pastor bring his people up to the work of filling God's house with the poor and humble, and of looking less to their private interests and tastes than to the general good.

2. *They should be conducted "decently and in order."*

This is the injunction of Scripture and of right feeling. There should be some prearranged form, whatever it may be, so that there may be no confusion, delay, haste. Order conduces to solemnity. "Order preserves reciprocity of action, the unity of manifoldness and development."[1] But while thus orderly, the services should not be mechanical or inflexible; there should be in them the spirit of freedom. They should not be so formal, so prescribed, so rigid, as that there can be no production of new power and fresh feeling. As has been hinted, the pastor should study the ancient liturgies, and derive suggestions from them. The Book of Common Prayer, which our fathers set aside, is still, in many respects, a treasury of liturgical suggestions and instruction, embodying much of the liturgical element that has run through the whole history of the church. There is certainly great beauty in the order of its prayers and services. (1.) The silent dedicatory prayer on entering the sanctuary, humbly acknowledging the holy presence of God searching the heart. (2.) The confession of sin. (3.) The prayer for absolution and pardon. (4.) The Lord's prayer. (5.) The invocation for the aid of the Holy Spirit. (6.) The song of praise — the *Te Deum*. (7.) The creed. (8.) The reading of the Old Testament and the Epistles. (9.) The sermon. (10.) The concluding prayers.

3. *They should be common.*

Public worship is "common worship" — the worship of many together. If, as political economists tell us, self-love is the bond of society, the love of all is the bond of the

[1] Nitzsch, System of Chr. Doc., § 194, p. 357.

church. Nitzsch says, "The condition of living and true fellowship which Christians shall have, in the Lord, with each other, and with the past and future church, is common prayer, in accordance with the word of God. (Matt. 18 : 20. Compare Acts 2 : 42, 4 : 24.) A community continually offering up thanksgiving and supplications, can never cease to intercede for the magistracy, the people, and the world, with which it is connected. (1 Tim. 2 : 1.) The more a congregation prays in the name of Jesus, the truer it becomes, and, as true, is always heard. Individuals ought to submit to all the discipline of the Spirit, and to all external order requisite for their attaining a more and more common prayer. (1 Cor. 14; Ephes. 5 : 19.) If they are bound to cherish their assemblies, they are equally bound to consecrate them in communion."[1] Again he says, "Communion opposes the predominance of individualism." There should be in public worship nothing which shuts out any class of persons, or any person, from its enjoyment; but there should be a common platform, on which all can stand — a common feeling, in which all can share. Of course this communion in Christian worship is not a mere social fellowship, a mere natural genial feeling of sympathy, desirable as this is, but it is a fellowship in religious things. Therefore there will be, probably, those in every congregation who do not, in heart, join in the services; and yet the services should be such that they all may join.

And the pastor should not confine himself, in the exercises of public worship, to any particular class — say older persons, or even professed believers. The services of God's house should be so conducted that all persons may be comprehended and benefited, and every one have his portion in due season.

This opens an interesting and difficult question, as to *the theory of a Christian congregation*, in the conduct of public

[1] System of Chr. Doc., p. 357.

worship. Schleiermacher's views on this point, although independent and peculiar, are at least worth considering. They are noticed in Dr. Lücke's sketch of his life. (p. 53.) Dr. Lücke says, "But, on the other hand, I might declare that it has always afforded me special gratification, and has appeared to me exceedingly praiseworthy, when Schleiermacher has mounted the pulpit with the magnanimous assumption of his believing and affectionate soul, that he found the Christian congregation, as such, *already* established and gathered together by the Lord and his spirit, and that he was not called to the first *planting* of their faith, but rather to the *watering* of that which was already planted. Schleiermacher did not overlook the different stages of knowledge and piety which exist in a congregation; he took good notice of states that are defective. But (in preaching) he always assumed, as the starting-point, a certain *average* measure of Christian faith and life as existing in the congregation. In an age in which there are so many who deal with Christian congregations as if the work of redemption and regeneration had not yet found a beginning in them, either consciously or unconsciously, or as if it had every Sunday to be commenced anew, and by this perverse fashion, weary and exasperate, rather than elevate and gladden, Schleiermacher's opposite peculiarity is only a matter of praise."

The pastor, in his preaching and sanctuary services, may not assume to take the place of God, and divide his congregation formally into the sheep and goats, or to denote any one in particular in the assembly as having no right to join in the spiritual worship of God's house; for how can he look into the heart? His duty is to "*hold forth the word of life*" to all; to show what true faith is, and what unbelief and unpardoned sin are; and each one may judge of his own heart. The pastor should preach for all and pray for all; he should preach truthfully, searchingly, but not invidiously, or with narrow personality. He should com-

prehend all in the present possibilities of mercy — in the wide arms of Christian love. The further question here arises, *Should a preacher address one sermon entirely to the believing and one entirely to the unbelieving?* It may be that sometimes this is absolutely necessary; the subject or the occasion may require it; but as a general rule it is better in every sermon, viewing it as a part of *common* worship, or as belonging to all, to try to have something in it, or to develop something from it, fitted to benefit all classes of hearers. Every true Christian needs to be admonished on all subjects that the impenitent need to hear, because he is still imperfect in all these points; and every impenitent man, on the other hand, can learn something from what is said to believers, because he thus discovers what the higher life is, and a desire may be awakened to secure it for himself.

Upon the true theory of a Christian congregation as connected with the services of the sanctuary, Vinet has some interesting remarks. (Pas. Theol., p. 204.)

4. *They should be edifying.*

This is the preacher's golden opportunity to build up the people in the most holy faith. Truth, not dogma, should be preached, and in every manner set forth. All the parts of the services should contain divine nutriment. The faithful manifestation of Christ in the sanctuary has ever been accompanied by the teaching and converting power of God. Henry Melville has a sermon upon "God's way in the Sanctuary" (Sermons, vol. i., p. 403), in which his aim is to show that God rules in all the services of his sanctuary; that he uses his truth there set forth in his own way, or he uses what portions of it he pleases, for the conversion and sanctification of souls. It is, indeed, very rare that a sermon is received as a whole by any one of the congregation; but a thought, a remark, a sentence, runs and glances hither and thither, like quicksilver, through the hearts of an assembly.

The pastor, having endeavored to find out the real wants of his people, should try to supply them all. "*We are debtors both to the wise and the unwise;*" and as the unwise form sometimes a large class of the congregation, one should be careful how he preaches exclusively to the instructed, or wise (*die Gebildeten*).

Let us give up our scholarly ideals, and cast them to the winds, if they stand in the way of our coming to the people's true wants and hearts, of exciting a real interest on their part.

Edward Irving spoke of the teaching of ministers in these words: "They should prepare for teaching gypsies, bargemen, miners, by apprehending their way of conceiving of things; and why not also prepare for teaching imaginative men, and scientific men, who bear the world in hand?" He went astray, doubtless, in his interpretation of the Scriptures; but as a preacher and leader, or prince, in the worship of God's house, in which and for which he lived, there is much to be learned from his life. While impressed with the idea of conducting the worship, in its outward forms, with a certain majestic solemnity and order, his heart seemed to expand at such seasons, taking in all, and yearning over them from the highest to the lowest, to instruct, nourish, and save them. The great quality of preaching, when regarded simply as an act of worship, as part of the services of the sanctuary, is *unction*, or that which is communicated to it by the spirit of Christ, and which shows itself in the preacher's desire to make his preaching and the whole service conducive to the spiritual life of all, and to the praise of God. Thus the service should be drawn from God and return to him, as the word which goes forth and comes back to its author; it should not be a purely human effort, standing by itself, and apart from God, but should proceed from the word, the spirit, the love of God.

For the services of the sanctuary to be thus edifying, should *not be too long*. Religious interest and elevation of

feeling cannot be kept up beyond a certain point, since the power of receptivity is a measure of the power of production. The services should not go on to repletion or exhaustion. While all are fed, the people should feel that there was ample provision left in God's house for all wants. There should be reserved power and reserved feeling in the services. These, with perhaps exceptional periods, should be even, simple, nutritive, instead of being protracted and unnaturally exciting. They should have less mental exhaustion and more spiritual interest on the part of both pastor and people, than are sometimes thought needful.

5. *They should be genuinely devotional.*

Let the order be irregular, the teachings be illiterate, but the heart will save all; while, on the other hand, if the devotional element is absent from the sanctuary services, there is the form without the life. The pastor should not enter the sanctuary to lead in its sacred services without some preparation of spirit, without having steeped his own soul in prayer; and thus he may come to his people with his face shining from communion with God, as a messenger directly from the throne.

This leads us to speak of the *public prayer* — the prayer of the sanctuary. It is introduced by the words, "Let us pray," and as a prayer to lead all the people, it should have a comprehensive and outwardly formal character.

(1.) It should be plain, so that all may be able to follow it. At the same time it should not be carelessly expressed, and the language should be choice and pure, though simple.

(2.) It should unite all hearts; it should be common prayer; it should raise and bear up the desires of all hearts to God, as those of one man; it should have nothing private, peculiar, personal, exclusive in it.

(3.) It should have a premeditated order. Dr. Miller, of Princeton, recommended that young ministers should write out the prayer for the sanctuary *verbatim*. This advice is

good for here and there a preacher, but we would certainly not commend it to all; yet what is called "the long prayer," and perhaps all the devotional services of the sanctuary, should be sufficiently premeditated, in respect to the subjects of prayer and order of thought, to allow of no confusion or hesitation. But while the prayer should not be entirely unprepared, there should be nothing in it of a studied, literary, or ambitious character — nothing to attract attention by its style; it should be the medium of the desires of the whole congregation. These desires should be drawn into its current, so that none can be listening critically to its language, but joining in its hearty petitions.

(4.) It should be, in tone and language, prayer, not preaching. Even though the prayer may be thoughtful, and deeply subjective often, it should not express a train of thought so much as a train of feeling. It should humbly and penitently address God, and not the congregation.

(5.) While simple, it ought not to be a routine or conventional prayer. While it may not contain novel, odd, and startling expressions, yet it should avoid hackneyed phrases; for these do not express fresh feeling, and time is lost in their repetition. The prayer of the sanctuary ought briefly to comprehend the occasion, the theme of the sermon, the peculiar wants of the time and the people, and the common wants of all times and of every people. *Its variety should come from its being drawn from the subject of the sermon*, or from the thoughts and feelings awakened by meditation upon a particular portion of divine truth. All expressions lacking dignity in the direct address to God; all flippant familiarity with the Almighty, or even the carrying of a child-like manner of expression to too great an extreme; all petitions which play around local facts or events, and which inform Omniscience of what has occurred; and, above all, every expression that contains personal praise, — these, simple good taste, to say nothing of a higher sentiment, would lead us to avoid. Neither human

praise nor blame should be administered in prayer, but God should be the predominating thought.

(6.) There should be a Christian tenderness of tone in the public prayer, and in cases of affliction, and under peculiar circumstances, this common prayer may dwell for a moment upon personal particulars, upon the circumstances of families or individuals of the congregation.

Let it be remembered that this is the peculiarly *devotional* part of the services, the pure breathings of spiritual desire, which lend to all parts a true tone, glow, and unction. This common prayer for common wants recognizes the Holy Ghost as the Helper, and calls down the sanctifying influences of the Spirit to pervade and unite the whole worship; for the true communion with God in public worship is essential to the communion of saints with each other.

6. *They should be full of the new hope, joy, and immortal life of Christ.*

The character of the worship of the sanctuary on "*the Lord's day*," the day of Him who rose from death and who triumphed over evil, should be predominantly one of joy, not of gloom. It is indeed "*dies solis*," where the full risen sun of divine love and peace shines clearly; and this was the earliest view of the day, and of its comforting, strengthening, delightful services.[1] The element of "glad rest," the joyful and festival element, brought into the worship of the Christian sanctuary by the great fact of Christ's resurrection, and of his gift of "eternal life," should never be lost sight of. One should not obtain the idea from the services of the Christian sanctuary that he might as well be in a deistic temple. The prayers, songs, sermon, should have their living unity in Christ — should all breathe of him and of his love, through whose complete offering a new approach to the throne of grace is made, and a pure spiritual worship is rendered possible.

[1] Justin Martyr, Apol. ad Anton. Pius Ignatius, ad Magnes, c. 9. Tertullian, ad Nationes, 1, 3.

There can be, indeed, no true Christian worship out of Christ, or without the idea of sacrifice. We come to God through him who has made God known to us, who has shown us the Father, who has opened to us, sinners, a way of access to the Holiest. Vinet says, "Every hour of worship should present an entire Christ to the soul of the believer."

§ 40. *Church Music.*

There is no element of worship which so fuses the feelings and affections into one holy emotion, and thus brings the riches of the heart into the service of God, as song; as it is said in Colossians (3 : 16), "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*"

The pastor may do much to regulate this all-important department of public praise; and it depends upon him, in a great measure, whether it be worthy of God's service, and promotive of true worship, or something isolated, wholly artistic, and unspiritual. The pastor, indeed, should love the sanctuary and all that belongs to it, — as is said in the eighty-fourth Psalm, of the migratory birds in the spring, that return to their accustomed haunts, — he should dwell in it, and still praise God as his chief joy.

Sacred music should be simple and pure — almost severe — in character, grand and elevated in movement, so as to express the thought of immortality, and to bear up the soul on its strong wings to heaven. It may be also fervid and varied, expressing warmth of religious feeling, and the spontaneous desires of the heart.

Music is naturally the expression of joy, as prayer is of affliction: thus James says (5 : 13), "*Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*" Much of the dulness of church music arises, doubtless, from the slow and languid movement with which hymns are sung;

it is owing partly to want of interest, and partly to the want of a highly cultivated taste. Church music should never be toned down to a painfully artistic precision, but may have considerable freedom, irregularity, and range, — though it should be the best music artistically, — i. e., the best fitted for the house of God, the freest and most full of life; yet, as art in religion should be secondary to higher ends, sacred music had better lack high scientific refinement than display much of scientific skill. The province of music in worship is not to please the trained musical ear, nor even to give variety and attraction to the public service, but simply to be the medium of the common devotions of the people.

The foundation of Protestant church music, says Hagenbach, is the choral.[1] The choral (*cantus plenus*, *plein chant*) was a very early institution in the church; and while gradually given up by the Roman Catholic and Greek churches, it was held upon, or rather revived, by the Reformed churches, as a means of spiritual reformation. Indeed, the very idea of church music necessitates a full chorus, or united song, and does not allow of the single voice, or *solo;* and it hardly allows of the church choir, which is a Roman Catholic innovation; unless, indeed, the choir is joined with the singing of the congregation. The true way, we think, to carry out the highest idea of church music, is to have the church choir and congregational singing combined. The choir is for the purpose of teaching and upholding the congregation, and should be in strict organic and spiritual relationship with the congregation — should form a part of the true Christian congregation.

We cannot enter into the endlessly prolific theme of *hymnology;* but evidently perfection has not yet been arrived at in any of our numerous books of sacred song, although an advance has been made, in the right direction,

[1] Grundlinien der Liturgik und Homiletik, p. 43.

in the character and the catholicity of the collections. Our books, however, have still too much in them that is unlyrical and unfit for public service. There is a vast deal of religious poetry extant, but few men have written hymns proper for the worship of the sanctuary, and that live in the heart of the church; we could count the names of such upon our fingers. This, indeed, is a rare *charisma*. Hymns that cannot be sung, and that are not sung, should be stricken out of public collections. Hymns not adapted to easy melodies — purely didactic hymns — preaching or dogmatic hymns — unpoetical or too poetical hymns — hymns that the instinct of a true leader avoids, — these should not remain in the hymn book. The hymn book should be a loved and favorite book among the people; it should be in the hands and in the hearts of the congregation; therefore it should not be bulky, nor contain many hymns that do not have root in the common faith and affection — that are abstract, studied, and subjective. Old hymns that have borne the wear and tear of ages; those that are, in fact, reproductions of the most ancient hymns of the church, as the "*Veni, Creator Spiritus*" — "Come, Holy Spirit;" and hymns that have their inspiration from the word and spirit of God, — true Christian hymns, in which Christ and his praises are sung, — those are the best. As to the tunes, they may, and perhaps should, comprehend the four parts suited to male and female voices — to all voices; yet it must be said, that the best judges of music in Germany prefer that the congregational singing in the churches should be in unison, all following the air. The tunes should be suited to the spirit and character of the hymns; notwithstanding Wesley's famous aphorism, the tunes ought not to have light and degrading associations. The practice of playing long voluntaries and interludes, breaking the current of united song, and introducing the purely artistic idea, is to be reprobated. The organ is a noble instrument, wonderfully adapted to church music; "it dwells in the house

of God, and is enthroned in holiness — a church within a church;" it should, nevertheless, keep its own place, and act a humble part. It should merely aid and accompany the songs of the church, and not usurp an exclusive place in the services of the sanctuary. How often is the impression of a tender and spiritual service entirely destroyed by some performer's playing, in thunder tones, an opera march to accompany or hustle people out of the church! On the contrary, they should be led out with the parting benediction of peaceful and solemn music resting upon them,[1] not blown out as from the mouth of a piece of musical ordnance.

We would give some brief reasons for the general adoption of *congregational singing* in our churches.

1. *It is scriptural, and in accordance with the spirit of Christianity.* The first song of praise given us in the Bible is the song of Moses. (Ex. 15.) "*Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord*" — "*and Miriam and all the women answered them.*" Here are both congregational singing and responsive or choral singing united. In the Hebrew worship, although instrumental choirs were in use, and were made a prominent feature of the musical service of the sanctuary, yet the whole congregation joined in the choruses. "*Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee,*" was the spirit of the worship. "*Both young men and maidens, old men and children,*" united in the song of praise. The whole assembly was divided into three parts, or choirs — into priests, Levites, and the great congregation. (See 1 Chron. 15: 16–25, 25: 1–8.) This arrangement was for choral singing. (See also Nehemiah's account of the dedication of the walls of Jerusalem, Neh. 12.) But among the early Christians, such a thing as even a choir was entirely unknown. In the time of Pliny, he tells us the assembly sang a hymn together, "*Carmenque Christo, quasi Deo, dicere secum invicem,*" probably a kind of metrical prayer sung or recited rhythmi-

[1] Hagenbach.

cally at the public services and feasts of love. The singing of all the people at the communion table, which has descended to our times, was undoubtedly the general mode of singing of the primitive Christians. It was not until the fourth century, in the beginning of spiritual decline, when the true spirit of Christianity was dying out, and being replaced by a hierarchical unity, that the distinct choir was introduced. An ecclesiastical historian says, "At this time a distinct class of persons was appointed to take charge of this part of religious worship. But the people continued for a century or more to enjoy, in some measure, their ancient privilege of singing together, joining occasionally in the chorus and singing the responses."

Returning, then, to congregational singing, is returning to the method of the primitive church; and it best expresses the social spirit of our faith. United song lifts hearts above all walls of separation, and enables them to flow together, if the object of the song is divine. This communion of hearts in song cannot be realized so well in choir singing; for listening to the singing of others is to remain one's self in a passive condition. We may be delighted, softened, and thrilled by the music, but the heart is not stirred as in the act of singing one's self. The effect is æsthetical, not devotional. The deepest springs of emotion are not touched, and the melody in the heart is not heard. When the novelty of congregational singing is worn off, the heart of the people goes out in spontaneous worship of God while singing in accord together, each forgetting himself, and all borne up by the sacred words into which the voice and heart are thrown. Therefore we believe there is more of true worship, and more of true honor of Christ, in congregational singing, than in any other kind of church music.

2. *It fills an important want in our congregational mode of worship.* It makes it "congregational;" whereas, as it is sometimes conducted, it is the least so of all modes of worship. We depend upon the stimulus of the sermon to keep

people interested. There is not enough of the gentle, healthful, and simple action of the minds and hearts of the people, while themselves participating in the solemn and joyful services of the Lord's house. Congregational singing would go far to remedy this serious evil; and, as has been said, congregational singing is the true Protestant method of church music. Gregory I. introduced the Ambrosian song, or chant, in the place of the popular choral; and, in opposition to this Roman Catholic choir singing, the congregational mode was introduced into the Reformed churches chiefly through Luther, and became a mighty instrument of reformation in Germany, Switzerland, Scotland, and England. Papal writers fulmined against it, as an instrument of fanaticism and revolution; it was called "the Geneva fashion." It was the singing of the people, in contrast to the singing of the priests. It was earnestly adopted and employed by the English Puritans, who, however, disapproved of the use of the organ, and the singing of responses, not liking what they called "the tossing of the psalms from one side to the other, with interminglings of organs." The Westminster assembly approved of congregational singing in these words: "It is the duty of Christians to praise God publicly by the singing of psalms together in the congregation, and also privately in the family. In singing of psalms the voice is to be tunably ordered; but the chief care must be to sing with understanding, making melody unto the Lord with the heart as well as with the voice." Congregational singing is still the mode in the European Protestant Reformed churches, especially in Scotland and Germany. In the city-churches of Germany the choir is added, to sing more elaborate introductory and occasional pieces; but in the ordinary singing all the people join, and sing with a heart, with a full voice, unto the Lord. No one thinks of his own singing, but each seems to be absorbed in the simple act of worship. There is not much of elaborate melody or tune to the hymns, only a certain measured

rhythm, almost monotonous in its effect; but one never loses the idea that it is a real part of the worship; and, at times, in the larger congregations, the wave or swell of sound is majestic, although the artistic effect is the last thing thought of.

3. *It is expressive and promotive of a spirit of revival.* It is a noticeable fact, that in times of spiritual reformation, Christians instinctively resume congregational singing, like streams that in time of freshet flow together. Now there must be some connection between the two facts. New converts love to sing; and as men become more deeply interested in spiritual things, more filled with the thoughts, feelings, and joys of Christ's kingdom, they give utterance to these new emotions in united song. Congregational singing is an untrammelled and joyful expression of the heart; it is also a humble expression of religious emotion. The individual is lost in the multitude; all are brought to the same level; the spirit of criticism is expelled. No one says, "How finely that was sung!" but each one feels that it is good to sing, because God is good, and is to be praised and adored by all. If one voice is too high, or another too low, — if one is too shrill, or another too harsh, — what matters it? It is a stream of united praise to the Most High, that flows, even if it flows like a mountain torrent full of rocks and breaks, toward the ocean of God's glory. True religious impressions are often made by congregational singing, where the spirit of praise and love abounds. Its humility, its good feeling, its expression of union and brotherhood, its simplicity and fervor, — these penetrate and affect the hearts of even unbelieving men. Many men have been converted by the simple hymn in which all join, who have stood out against the sermon, which is but the expression of one mind and heart. Such an instance is related in Dr. Beecher's life: at a prayer meeting held in the Hanover Street Church, in Boston, a familiar revival hymn was sung by the whole congregation; and one who afterward narrated his reli-

gious experience said that it was during the singing of that hymn that his heart had been first touched. Thus music may sometimes become not only the means of *expression*, but the means of *impression* — of deep and lasting impression. Congregational singing is also an economical method. Church music, as every pastor and paying church member knows, is an expensive item; but in congregational singing the whole matter of church music becomes more an affair of the church membership itself, and tends to develop the talents of the church, and thus a church is led gradually, as it should do, to depend less and less upon the world outside, and to be sufficient in itself for all its needs, even of the most practical and scientific kind. Any one who has a musical "gift" may thus employ it for God's praise, and do as much for the glory of his name, and give as much to the cause of Christ, by voluntarily practising that gift in singing with the congregation, and in teaching the congregation how to sing God's praise, as in any other way.

But congregational singing cannot be perfected in a day, for it is a great work, a great consummation, which must be skilfully and patiently labored for. Of course there must be some knowledge of music in the congregation, and the people must have striven to cultivate themselves in this respect before any adequate result can be obtained. There should be, at first, a leader, a choir, and an organ; for the attempt to introduce congregational singing by summarily and entirely discarding the use of the choir, is one reason why it has so often failed. Music does not come from heaven in the sense that human effort is not needed to attain it; and perhaps some individuals cannot acquire it at all, though we believe that there are few who cannot learn to join in the singing of public worship. In Germany all sing because they have been educated from childhood to do so. We, as a nation, have also the native musical ability, but not always the musical cultivation. Shall a beginning never be made? Shall we sit dumb in the Lord's house

forever? The tunes selected should be at first plain and simple — the old familiar tunes, in which there is real melody, but little of difficult variation or rapid changes; for we want no delicate turns, nor brilliant effects, in congregational singing, but something easy and grand in movement; and it should be thoroughly understood that all are to join in the endeavor. It is to be congregational singing; the whole congregation is to be compromised for the success of the good experiment, and every one is to feel a personal responsibility. Let it be understood (and the pastor must be the chief leader in the work) that this part of the service is to be *reformed;* is to be brought back to the true congregational way; is to be changed from the Romish choir singing to the primitive apostolic singing of all the people; is to mean something; is to be true worship; and that every one is to sing the praises of God. If that is done, then God will bless that part of the worship of his sanctuary; and we venture to predict that a new religious life will come in with congregational singing; for then the people will not be listeners, but worshippers.

§ 41. *Conduct of a Prayer Meeting.*

As a Christian body, depending upon common aid, looking for common blessings, working for a common object, bound by common hopes, the church of Christ feel an instinctive drawing together in the exercise and expression of their devotional desires. To worship together once a week in the sanctuary is not enough. They are constrained to meet often in the name of Jesus, relying on his clear promise.

The prayer meeting is important, because it is one of the chief means of maintaining the church's life; and the meeting is difficult to sustain, because the spirit of prayer is the expression of the spiritual life of the church, and because certain reasons beyond the prayer meeting itself —

beyond the power of the pastor — are constantly at work to deaden the faith of the church.

Yet much may be done to render the prayer meeting attractive and efficient for good.

In the first place, the pastor should indoctrinate his people, or they themselves should be thoroughly established, in three fundamental truths.

1. *In a perfect faith in the power, duty, and privilege of prayer.* Prayer is both the natural and appointed means of spiritual life; it is a real communion with the source of life; it is the necessary demand whose supply is in God; and it brings the human heart into a condition to be blessed; as says Jeremy Taylor, the spirit "ascends and dwells with God, until it returns laden with the blessing of Heaven;" and it follows that a Christian, or a Christian church, that neglects this means of intercourse with God, cannot live or have power. There should be no lingering unbelief here.

2. *In the need of unity of the Spirit in prayer.* This unity is created by the Holy Spirit, who brings discordant spirits into one, in the will of God. Differences of will in the church are occasioned by unbelief, pride, jealousy, ambition, indifference to truth, in fine, the working of the selfish principle. Such differences prove the absence of the Spirit, or of the spiritual mind. Personal controversies, strifes for precedence, sectarian conflicts, doctrinal errors and discords, all human things that separate, abound where the life of the Spirit does not abound; but when Christians are brought into one mind, with one accord, there is the uniting work of the divine Spirit, and prayers become the inspiration of the Spirit, the utterances of the desires of Christ's heart, and are powerful with God; and that is the place, above all others, which *draws the assimilating love and power of Heaven to it.* This unity of the spirit of the church implies also true repentance, the humble, obedient, and holy mind, brought into one with the mind and spirit of God and of his holy kingdom and peo-

ple. Instead of many centres, as in the world, where every individual will is its own centre of life and purpose, there is one common centre of life in Christ;[1] and this is the work of the unifying Spirit.

3. *The cultivation of a spirit of constant prayer and supplication.* Christians, we are told, should "*pray always with all prayer;*" they should "*continue instant in prayer.*" The whole life of the Christian should be, in Origen's words, "one great continual prayer," for this is the expression of an abiding faith in God as the real Strengthener, Vindicator, Redeemer of the soul. The church member, therefore, should not expect to be made prayerful at the prayer meeting itself if he carries thither no spirit of prayer; but he should live in such a prayerful state, that to meet his brethren to pray is but giving an opportunity for the manifestation of this spirit, and is therefore the greatest of privileges. Christians coming together without the spirit of prayer, with cold hearts, will kindle no new life, but will help to freeze one another; while, on the other hand, the concourse of truly believing, praying, loving hearts, will produce a more powerful flame of devotion, so that each and all will glow with increased ardor, and advance more rapidly in holiness.

The pastor should also set forth the reasons or motives which should draw Christians to the social prayer meeting, as to the most profitable of all their meetings and services —such motives as the love of a common Saviour, fidelity to covenant vows and obligations, and the attainment of higher spiritual life. A constant attendance upon the meeting of social prayer will tell powerfully upon a Christian's life and character, as will a constant neglect of the prayer meeting. As disciples of Christ, we cannot live alone: we are born into a household; and there can be, as a general rule, no great advance made in holiness, away from the

[1] Maurice to Palmer.

common life, the common hope, the common love. One cannot well grow holy entirely by himself. And lastly, he should urge the motive of advancement of Christ's work. This must come, and can come only, through common prayer and striving. What Christian can be exempted from this? There is a work to be done, as well as a holiness to be attained. Other souls are to be converted, as well as one's own soul to be purified and saved; and a genuine desire to save souls will bring men to the prayer meeting, to seek God's aid, to obtain strength to work. The answer to their prayers for the conversion of men is often, we doubt not, in God's making *them* the instrumentality in doing this work, endowing them with a winning and overcoming power. Thus we hold that prayer should be always accompanied by the earnest, vigorous use of every instrumentality of good. *It does not take the place of active effort.* Good is not accomplished by men's praying, and not working. A church may pray for the conversion of the world till doomsday; but if it lifts not a finger to aid the cause, and goes not forth, with strenuous purpose and self-denying labor, to bring the new kingdom of light and love into men's hearts, the world, as far as that church is concerned, will roll darkling on forever. Prayer aids work, prompts the best methods, inspires Christian zeal, and makes it successful.

But in regard to the meeting itself, so much depends upon the pastor for its right conduct, that he, above others, should be prepared in his own mind and heart, and should not approach it with a cold, preoccupied mind; for an unspiritual leader kills the life of the prayer meeting. There is an intellectual preparation which he should make in his selection of the passage of Scripture, the hymns, the theme of prayer and contemplation, and the general direction to be given to the meeting, which lend it interest, aim, and depth.

1. *Those things to be avoided* in the conduct of a prayer meeting.

(*a.*) *Self-confidence and self-display.* In all the pastor says and does he should reprove this spirit in himself and in others. He should impress the conviction that it is a meeting with God for divine ends, and not for the exhibition of man's methods, thoughts, or powers. There may be freedom, freshness, intellectual life, brought in, but there should be no display of these, and there is no spot where such display is more out of place. The presence of God, the desire to reach God, the hungering and thirsting after the gifts and life of God, in a word, the devotional character of the meeting, should not be lost sight of. It is not a meeting for preaching, but for prayer. The didactic, the intellectual, the human element, should make place for the devotional. All the remarks and instruction should be but for the purpose of guiding the soul in its petitions, and awakening faith in the power of prayer and the nearness of God.

(*b.*) *A complaining, petulant, desponding spirit.* There may be solemn admonition and faithful pleading (indeed, this is the time, for saying plain things) ; but to give way to a discouraged, fault-finding spirit is wrong toward God, and it extinguishes what feeble hope there may be. It does no good to be always telling the church how dead and cold it is ; but let there be life in one's self, and that will communicate itself to others. Some church members are in a chronic state of complaint, and this is their only capital. They should be silenced by the breath and prevalence of a higher spirit. Let the prayer meeting be a serious and thoughtful, but still a cheerful place — a place of light when all around and outside may seem dark. True emotion is not often highly intensified, but rather expressive of an even sentiment of cheerful hope. If this is the tone of the prayer meeting, troubled and restless souls will run to it for comfort, peace, and refreshment.

(*c.*) *Monotonousness.* While there may be a certain

degree of steady uniformity, the meeting should not be permitted to fall into a groove. One brother, and especially the pastor, should not do all the praying or speaking; neither should one truth, or aspect of truth, — not even the subject of a revival of religion, — become a fixed theme of remark or petition. Routine should be broken up, if needful, by bold summary methods. Different minds should be brought out; all talents should be developed; the monstrous error that one should be past forty, or fifty years old, before he has a right to speak in a prayer meeting, should be exploded, and young men should be summoned to the front. Passing events should be taken advantage of, and the present moment should be infused into the meeting.

(*d.*) *Long prayers.* "Where weariness begins, devotion ends." Long prayers, long remarks, long hymns, and long exercises, excepting in times of extraordinary interest, are dull things. The meeting should rarely run over the appointed hour; but while there should be no miserable rule as to time, yet there should be prompt movement in the meeting. All should be natural, fluent, and free. Brethren should be encouraged to pray for what they want, for no less and no more. There should be a basis of sincere desire in every petition offered, and nothing should be uttered for form's sake. If this principle were observed, the prayers of the best Christians would be abbreviated; for how much more do Christians often ask for in their prayers than they desire! The Lord's prayer, which comprehends this world and eternity, how short it is! The publican's prayer, how few its words! The feeling that one is obliged to make a long prayer, or a long address, prevents many a modest man from taking part in the exercises, who, perhaps, would be able and willing to utter one valuable thought springing from his own experience, or to put up one humble petition from the depths of his soul.

But let us now look at the things to be specially *cared and sought for* in the conduct of a prayer meeting.

(*a.*) *A full attendance.* The pastor, to bring about this result, will find it necessary to converse privately with persons, as well as instruct publicly on the subject. He should kindly admonish Christians of their duty to Christ and his kingdom, and thus warn or win, if possible, all church members to come, with more or less regularity, to the prayer meeting; and, above all, the pastor should be present himself, and lead the meeting.

(*b.*) *A good beginning.* Dr. Finney, in his work on Revivals, notices this (p. 70). He says that the pastor, or leader, should call upon the most spiritual first to strike the key-note of the meeting; for it rarely rises above its beginning. It is well to have one definite truth for meditation, springing from the word of God, and thus the meeting will be grounded in the spirit and will of God; but no method should be rigid.

(*c.*) *Freedom.* It sometimes happens that a church member, from age, character, or will, obtains a licensed tyranny over a prayer meeting, to the repression of spontaneous feeling and speech on the part of the other members; which domination over the free utterance of the brotherhood should not be submitted to. The pastor should jealously guard the freedom of the meeting, and should nourish the most timid manifestations of the Spirit from all true followers of Christ. He should encourage all expression of sincere thought and desire, and he should suffer no undue influence of any kind to weigh upon the perfect freedom of the meeting, not even the too great freedom of some.

(*d.*) *Point.* Even in the wording of prayer there should be direct and precise language. Superfluous sentences, long parentheses, vague and unmeaning expressions, should be avoided in the pastor's prayer; and this will teach others: but, above all, there should be definiteness of object in the petition; something in particular should be prayed for; and it need not always be, as we have said, specifically, a

revival, but some other object which bears upon the spiritual interests of the people, and which may be preparatory to a higher spiritual life; such as ignorance and darkness of mind in regard to divine things; the critical state of the country; some afflicting event or bereavement of general interest; the need of a better understanding and obedience of some principle of morality; some doctrine or grace, which has, perhaps, lain long neglected; the religious welfare of business men; the prevailing evils of the community; the condition of the impenitent of the congregation; the preaching of the word on the "Lord's day;" the religious state and training of the young; family religion; the growth of holiness in the individual heart.

(*e.*) *Life.* Whatever else the prayer meeting fails in, it should have life. Living thoughts, living prayers, coming from the heart of man, and going to the heart of God, should be sought for. The Holy Spirit, — the "Creator Spirit," — should truly inspire the prayers, and breathe new life through the services. Coldness, deadness, sin, unbelief, are nothing but the results of the soul's separation from God; and this fellowship with God the Spirit, being renewed, there comes life in the souls of God's children, and this is manifested to all in their prayers. Through all that is said and done, there should pour an ever-flowing current of life.

(*f.*) *Fervent faith.* Such a faith is invincible; and the believer prays on, whether there be few or many to pray with him, grateful for the least answers of prayer, hungering and thirsting to be filled, believing that it will be answered, and that the blessing will surely come. The woman of old time who was willing to take the crumbs that fell from the master's table, is a type of this humble but courageous spirit, faithful in times of declension, living in the love of God, never distrusting Christ, never despairing of his aid. One such praying believer, though the humblest of the flock, is an inestimable possession to any

church, and should be greatly valued by the pastor; for such a soul forms a perpetual germ of revival.

In conclusion, the prayer meeting, as we have said, should be something real — it should mean something earnest — progress in holy living, and in every good work for men and the world. It should prepare Christians to serve Christ. It should string their nerves to fight the good fight. It should not be kept up simply because it is the custom of the church to have such a meeting, and because it has descended from the most ancient times; but it should be regarded as a power — as a means of present and mighty good. By it, the preaching of the word may be greatly aided; for without the prayers of the church, the preaching of the pastor is not likely to succeed. The power of the Spirit must be concurrent with the publication of the truth.

§ 42. *Marriage and Burial.*

Marriage, as a divine institution, dates back to the creation of the race, and is a fact of revelation. The union of the sexes, as established and blessed by God, is declared to be needful to the complete perfection of the life of the race, both physically and spiritually, since man is incomplete without woman, and the woman without the man; and in the marriage of the two the Saviour pronounced them (Matt. 19 : 6), to be "one." This is the divine law; for marriage is regarded in the Scriptures as a holy relationship in which two persons become virtually one, but in which, neither personal freedom nor selfhood is destroyed; it is established and strengthened. It presupposes a common associate life, wherein, while the individuality of each is respected, and there is perfect equality in regard to honor and dignity, yet there is a mutual surrender of will, so that there may be true harmony in all the great objects of living, for the best good of all concerned, and for the praise of

God. Of course the only root of such a perfect harmony and union of spirit must be in religion — in Christian faith. Marriage, therefore, if not a sacrament, as the Roman Catholics regard it, and as it very soon came to be esteemed in the early church, — the rite being accompanied with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, — yet it is a religious institution, and forms a pure type of the relationship of Christ to his church.

The marriage ceremony should be a Christian act, — an act of worship, — in which God's hand of mercy is gratefully acknowledged, a united consecration to his service made, and the divine Spirit invoked, in order that he may cause those who are entering into the married state to be sensible of the nature of their vows, that those vows may be made in faith, and that their love may be a spiritual and sanctified affection. It is an occasion where religion lends a glory to this human life; and when every word should aid the sacred character of a scene, in whose pure and joyful festivities the Lord himself might vouchsafe to grant, as he once did, his blessed presence. Since marriage is so enduring a relationship, it behooves the pastor to be extremely careful, and perfectly well prepared in the part he assumes in it. Even in minor matters relating to his portion of the solemn transaction, he should be sure that all proper requirements are fulfilled; and if he has any reason to suspect that there is anything in the history or circumstances of either party which is wrong and irregular, or which would invalidate a true Christian marriage, or even render it an unhappy and unfortunate one, he should courteously decline performing the ceremony; for by performing it he may be the means of inflicting a lasting wrong and injury. The true idea or intent of marriage is in the willing consent of the parties, from a sincere motive to promote the true ends of the family relationship; and therefore the pastor should not give the church's sanction, nor speak the divine benediction, upon a marriage between unfit parties, or under false

pretences of any kind. He should be able to speak with sincerity the solemn words, "*Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.*"

The *Burial Service* greatly differs in its forms among different churches. In some Congregational parishes in New England a long and elaborate funeral address is expected from the minister; and in other places, simply a prayer at the residence is required. There can be no doubt, however, that the devotional, and not the didactic, element should predominate at such a time; for burial is an act of true worship — of the humble praise of God for his power over, and presence in, death; and also of his manifestation in Christ, as the Resurrection and the Life. Death is itself the preacher. If one attempts an extended address, or anything like a deliberate and minute analysis of character, he will probably fail; for if, indeed, God's voice in death, if the silent expression of the life and character of the departed, do not reach the living, the voice of the human preacher will not do so.

A few appropriate extracts from the Scriptures, and a simple, feeling prayer, with the singing of a hymn and a benediction at the grave, prefaced, if the deceased has been a true Christian, with a word expressive of the hope of the glorious resurrection of the just, are, we think, all that is generally needed, and all that is best for a proper Christian burial. Vinet says (Pastoral Theology, p. 185), "Now, it is the pastor who renders religion visible; and seeing the progress which the mind has made, if the pastor be here wanting, some one will take his place, and make his absence more manifest, to the great disadvantage of his character. I would have the minister never absent, either from the house of death or from the cemetery. In many houses the pastor offers prayer before going out; but this will not suffice; he ought to attend the burial, and there should be another service, either at the open tomb or in the church. Some words from the Bible, and a prayer besides, are in all

cases sufficient." If, indeed, remarks are made at the funeral, they should be simple, devotional, leading the thoughts to dwell on immortality, and upon him who is the Giver of immortality. In referring to the deceased person, they should not attempt detailed characterization, especially if the character is not such as might be commended and imitated; and, above all, no allusion should be made to the faults of the deceased; for such remarks would but pain the hearts of friends, and do good to no one. Let us trust to the reflections of rational beings at such a time, and to the power of God's presence, and of the realization of eternal things in death, rather than to anything we can say.

Sometimes a pastor is called upon to preach a formal funeral sermon where the deceased has been a person of eminent piety, or of distinguished public character. In such a sermon, inordinate or indiscriminate praise should be avoided, and one had better keep inside than outside of the truth. The discourse should have, in any case, a predominating religious tone, not being confined wholly to personal biography, or description, which should be brief and truthful; and in case the deceased were a true believer, the whole service should be filled with the spirit of praise and hope, instead of sorrow; for it is well to let the world know that the death of the Christian is "gain;" that the woe is past, the shadows have fled away, the life has come, and the joy of the Lord has risen upon the soul. "For if the dead did die in the Lord, then there is joy to him and it is an ill expression of our affection and our charity, to weep uncomfortably at a change that hath carried our friend to a state of huge felicity. Nevertheless, something is to be given to custom, to fame, to nature and to the honor of deceased friends. I am not desirous to have a dry funeral; some flowers sprinkled over my grave would do well and comely; and a soft shower to turn those flowers into springing memory or a fair rehearsal."[1]

[1] Jeremy Taylor's Holy Living and Dying.

SECOND DIVISION.

THE CARE OF SOULS.

§ 43. *Qualifications for the Care of Souls.*

We return to our original idea, that the pastor is eminently an earthly representative of Christ, the Great Shepherd of souls. A small flock is assigned to him. It is not, or should not be, too large for his proper care of every member of it; for he is not merely a preacher to the "great congregation," and an officer of the church, but he is the personal guide and overseer of every soul of his people, "*taking heed to the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made us overseers.*"

As a shepherd keeps his eye on every sheep of the flock, so he "*watches for souls as he that must give account.*" All characters of men, and all stages of religious development, are comprehended in one pastoral care; and how is the pastor to know these differences, and to minister to them, unless, as the Saviour says of himself, "he searches them out"?

The apostle Paul was a settled pastor for three years, and he speaks of his pastoral work in this way: "*he ceased not to warn every one of them night and day with tears.*" In these words a great responsibility of the pastor is indicated, viz., that he should be acquainted with the special wants of all the souls committed to his charge. There are many who love to preach, and find in preaching a pleasurable excitement and a sense of power in exerting influence on others, who still find the pastoral work irksome. President Wayland, indeed, thought that interest in strictly pastoral labors was decidedly on the decline; yet, however

this may be, there can be no doubt that the main usefulness of a minister of Christ lies in pastoral labors; and although at first this may be the most tedious, and, for that reason, the most laborious part, it grows to be, with many pastors, the most useful and attractive department of the ministerial work. Indeed it is the testimony of every experienced minister that few, if any, become members of the church who are not thus personally visited and cared for. A minister's influence with his people should be one of mutual confidence, not one of authority on his part and of subserviency on theirs. It must be a *personal* relationship, a communication of personal influence, brought about by a life of kindly and devoted intercourse with the people, so that, in some faint degree, it may be said of the undershepherd, as it was said of Christ himself, "*I know my sheep, and am known of mine.*" "*My sheep hear my voice, and they follow me.*"

Many a man who is not a great preacher has accomplished more by his strictly pastoral labors than another man has done by brilliant and profound preaching; and this is not derogating from the first place which preaching holds. Vinet says, "Public preaching is comparatively easy and agreeable; only then can we be sure of our vocation to the ministry, when we are inwardly drawn and constrained to the exercise of the care of souls." He says also that "preaching to the pastoral work is as a part to the whole." The German writer Harms thought, as we have noticed, that preaching was the least important part of the pastoral office, and, in some respects, that which might be spared with the least disadvantage; although we cannot agree with that, yet when a minister declares that he is not able to make pastoral visits because his pulpit labors are so great, then his heart is getting cold; he has either too large a parish, or he makes too much of his pulpit.

Dr. Wayland recommends a young man to settle in a small parish, for either he will be unfaithful to all the duties

of a large parish, or he will soon break down under his labors; and it is assuredly a scriptural principle to begin at the lowest place; for, if one is worthy, he will be called up higher, or he will make a small place a large place, and cause it to yield a hundred fold.

There is a fearful want or waste of ministerial power somewhere. There is a laying out for greater things than the actual returns show. There is a long and studious preparation and small fruits in the actual work of the ministry. There is great science and little skill. Simpler men with simpler means have accomplished more. One reason of this failure, doubtless, is, that ministers are too ambitious for great things, for striking results, and do not take pains enough with the details of their work; they do not find out and minister to the real wants of their people. They do not strip off their classical armor, and come down into close and familiar contact with the feelings, characters, anxieties, sorrows, and sins of their flock. They are not, in fact, *good pastors*. It is the good pastor who knits himself to the hearts of his people. It is the man who, like the apostle, goes from house to house, and heart to heart, and does this, year in and year out.

We would, therefore, say, as a general remark, that an indispensable requisite of a successful pastorate is, that the pastor should *become personally acquainted with every one of his people*. That may seem to be a matter of course, but is by no means so, especially in large city congregations. In order to effect this result, the pastor should make a careful and particular study of his parish. That is his assigned field, and he should know it thoroughly, if he knows nothing out of it. He should know his people individually, and then he will know them collectively. He can best reach and influence the mass through individual men. He should penetrate beneath an outside acquaintance with his people, and should strive to know something of their varieties of character, their peculiarities of disposition, their

mental maladies and speculative opinions, as well as their external history and circumstances.

There is a remarkable passage quoted in Coleman's Antiquities (pp. 171, 172) from Gregory of Nazianzen, which shows that this necessity was early appreciated in the church. "Man," this father says, "is so various and uncertain a creature, that it requires great art and skill to manage him. For the tempers of men's minds differ more than the features and lineaments of their bodies; and, as all meats and medicines are not proper for all bodies, so neither is the same treatment and discipline proper for all souls. Some are best moved by words, others by examples; some are of a dull and heavy temper, and so have need of the spur to stimulate them; others that are brisk and fiery, have more need of the curb to restrain them. Praise works best upon some, and reproof upon others, provided that each of them be ministered in a suitable and seasonable way; otherwise they do more harm than good. Some men are drawn by gentle exhortations to their duty; others, by rebukes and hard words, must be driven to it. And even in this business of reproof, some men are affected most with open rebukes, others with private. For some men never regard a secret reproof, who yet are easily corrected, if chastised in public; others again cannot bear a public disgrace, but grow either morose, or impatient and implacable under it, who, perhaps, would have hearkened to a secret admonition, and repaid their monitor with their concession, as presuming him to have accosted them out of mere pity and love. Some men are to be so nicely watched and observed, that not the least of their faults are to be dissembled, because they seek to hide their sins from men, and arrogate to themselves thereupon the praise of being politic and crafty; in others it is better to wink at some faults, so that seeing we will not see, and hearing we will not hear, lest by too frequent chidings we bring them to despair, and so make them cast off modesty, and grow bolder in their

sins. To some men we must put on an angry countenance, and seem to deplore their condition, and to despair of them as lost and pitiable wretches, when their nature so requires it; others again must be treated with meekness and humility, and be recovered to a better hope and encouraging prospects. Some men must be always conquered and never yielded to; whilst to others it will be better to concede a little. For all men's distempers are not to be cured in the same way; but proper medicines are to be applied, as the matter itself, or occasion, or the temper of the patient will allow. And this is the most difficult part of the pastoral office, to know how to distinguish these things nicely, with an exact judgment, and with as exact a hand to administer suitable remedies to every distemper. It is a masterpiece of art, which is not to be attained but by good observation, joined with experience and practice." In connection with this passage, we quote the following one in the same vein from Baxter: "Our taking heed to all the flock necessarily supposes that we should know every person that belongs to our charge; for how can we take heed to them if we do not know them? We must labor to be acquainted as fully as we can, not only with the persons, but with the state of our people; their lives and conversations; what are the sins they are most in danger of; what duties they neglect, both with respect to the matter and the manner; and to what temptations they are peculiarly liable. If we know not the temperament or the disease, we are likely to prove unsuccessful physicians."

This pastoral skill is something different from a Shakspeare's knowledge of the human heart; it is something which must be given a man from above; it is a spiritual insight, a knowledge of the soul and its wants, that can be communicated only by the Spirit that searcheth the deep things of God and man. This constant and close study of the people is the pastor's out-door study, no less important than his in-door study — no less absorbing and grand.

The preaching on the "Lord's day," may be considered to be the common food; it is giving the bread of life to all, and is needed by all equally; but the pastoral work is a more careful distribution of truth to each soul according to its peculiar necessities. It is not the pleasantest part of the physician's work to search into the causes of disease, but this must be done; and it is needful sometimes to use the probe or the knife. The pastor should take up this work with firmness, patience, and skill.

A form of objection, sometimes made to the strictly pastoral work, is spoken of by Vinet. It is this; that a pastor supposes that he is not personally acceptable, and cannot make himself so to his people. "This is possible," Vinet says; "but be careful that you say this in good earnest. Do not say it after a first and indolent effort. Why, do you expect doors to open themselves to you at your mere approach? We are in general too hasty in saying that we are not acceptable. There are many more ways of access than we suppose, because there are more *necessities*, more *accessible* sides, more *occasions* than we think of. Our ministry is not so sure to be repelled when it exhibits itself under the form of Christian affection."

"Were I again to be a parish minister," said Leighton, "I would follow sinners to their homes, and even to their ale-houses." Doddridge wrote on his return from an ordination, "I have many cares and troubles; may God forgive me that I am so apt to forget those of the pastoral office! I now resolve to take a more particular account of the souls committed to my care; to visit as soon as possible the whole congregation, to learn more particularly the circumstances of them, their children and servants; to make as exact a list as I can of those that I have reason to believe are unconverted, awakened, converted, fit for communion, or already in it; to visit and talk with my people when I hear anything in particular relating to their religious state; to be especially careful to visit the sick; to begin immedi-

ately with the inspection of those under my own roof, that I may with the greater freedom urge other families to like care. O, my soul, thy account is great!"

The example of Dr. Chalmers is thus given: "Not satisfied with merely proclaiming the doctrines of the gospel from the pulpit on the Sabbath, not satisfied even with putting into that presentation all the energy of his regal intellect, and the enthusiasm of his affectionate heart, gathering about the truth all ornaments of scholarship, and impressing it by appeals most clear and pointed, as by arguments whose weight and pressure have rarely been surpassed — he labored also to carry it familiarly from house to house, throughout the week. He interested himself personally and warmly in the families of his parish. He knew the children and the aged, as well as the active of middle life. He knew the circumstances, characteristics, history of many of his people. And he was always ready with his word of counsel, his suggestive, practical, or doctrinal instruction, his free presentation of Christ, and his fitness to the soul. He aimed and desired to have his speech distil as the dew, in the constant day-to-day intercourse of life. He meant to speak to his people through his example as his words; and whenever a case occurred of special difficulty, requiring peculiar tact and skill in its management, it was affecting to see with what earnestness of thought, and what fervor of prayer this noble and shining mind devoted itself to the work of enlightening the ignorant, or of cheering the downcast, or of impressing and awakening the long impenitent."

But to bring this matter to a point, we would mention some of the needful qualifications for the pastoral care of souls, without dwelling upon them.

(1.) *Self-knowledge.* This is such a knowledge of human nature as one gets from a knowledge of his own heart; and for that purpose let the pastor thoughtfully note his own spiritual experience, to guide him in the care of

souls; for, "*as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.*"

(2.) *An attractive and friendly manner.*

(3.) *Adaptation to time, place, and occasion.* The pastor should have a word in season for every situation and condition in which he may happen to find a family or a soul. He should never allow himself to be thrown off his balance by a sudden assault made upon him. He should take his people on their own ground, and lead them gradually and easily, without jar, up to his own standard. He should understand the peculiarities in the circumstances and history of his own parish, not attacking deep-rooted prejudices with hasty zeal, but patiently guiding and instructing his people. He should study men by classes as well as by individuals, and he cannot, on the other hand, do this better than by studying individual men; for, as it has been said, "he who knows *one* man thoroughly, knows a whole class." If the people gain the impression that the pastor understands them, they will the more readily give him their confidence, and regard his counsel.

(4.) *A particularizing and systematic method.* George Herbert said, "If the parson comes to be afraid of *particularizing* in those things, he were not fit to be a parson." This particular attention to detail is an element of success in any great enterprise; it is not treating the people in the gross, but in the grain; it is knowing their names, histories, characters, families, places of business. There is, indeed, much of the genuine business talent required in the pastor's business; for it is a business, a work. The apostle writes, "*If a man desireth the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.*" Bengel, commenting on this passage, calls the ministerial office "*negotium, non otium.*" It must be entered upon and carried along with the same earnest spirit, the same minute attention to particulars, the same thoughtful adaptation of means to ends, as those by which any important secular business is carried on and rendered suc-

cessful. In the pastoral work, as in any other, effects will not be reached unless essential preliminaries are properly attended to and secured.

(5.) *Personal influence outside of purely ministerial influence.* It is this power of personally attaching men to himself, especially the young, which makes a pastor potent with his people. An enthusiasm for the pastor as a man; as a desirable companion; as one who knows something, and can do something, and can say something, besides preaching; as a genial, wholesome, attractive, magnetic man; as a magnanimous and heroic man, who is capable of generous deeds, — this is a vast help. Professor Park, in an article upon the late Dr. Clark, speaking of his free and pleasant intercourse with men, quotes the saying of Martin Luther: "As life cannot pass without society, it becomes thee to believe that thou pleasest God when thou speakest to thy brother with a jocund countenance, when thou invitest him to pleasantry by a cheery laugh, and when thou sometimes delightest him with a facetious and shrewd remark."[1]

This genial and attractive talent, when not carried to an unmanly extreme, unlocks hearts, and wins their confidence. One may preach the gospel by his looks and smile and hearty hand-grasp, as well as in words.

(6.) *A true absorbing love of souls.* That is the love of that which is best, the immortal jewel, in the nature; and that love may be, and should be, a genuine thing, without the slightest shadow of dissimulation. It is a sincere yearning and solicitude for the welfare of every soul comprised in the pastoral charge. That is a love which will bear almost any strain put upon it, any injustice, coldness, coarseness, or insult. When one has a determination springing from love, and wrought in prayer, to save a soul, and every soul of his people, he will not be repulsed by unkindness, nor by manifest aversion and hostility. He takes Jesus as his

[1] Cong. Quarterly, January, 1862.

example of long-suffering patience, whose brethren received him not, and yet whose love was perfect toward all. He knows that sin and selfishness may so entirely rule a heart, and destroy what is good and noble in it, that it is really incapable of regarding God's truth, or his messenger, with common respect. Love has pity. Depend upon it, love reigns in the pastoral office. One can do nothing for souls without it. By it the sheep of the flock are led along. It comprehends all other things and qualifications; it hopeth all things; it endureth all things; it believeth all things; it might reverently be added, it accomplishes all things. The best gift of God to the pastor is the power of loving.

7. *An earnest, hopeful, and courageous faith.* "A man may possibly meet with some formal minister that knows little of Christ, and loves him less, who yet can tell such an inquirer that by believing he shall find him, and instruct him somewhat about the notion of faith, and inseparable repentance, and leaving off sin, which things he himself who directs makes no use of, hath no experience at all of; yet may his information be useful to the soul seeking Christ, and in following them it may find him."[1] But if the guide be a man of ardent faith, who believes that the truth of the cross is "*the power of God unto salvation*," how much better, surer a guide! The earnestness of the apostles and first pastors was one, in Luther's phrase, "from the bottom of the heart." The believing man was behind what he spoke. He was not a mere brazen trumpet for the breath of God to fill. He was himself a living power, made so by the spirit of Christ, which inspired his own faculties in contact with the divine and infinite. Thus Christ exalts and purifies a man when he chooses him to do his work. He does not reduce him to something less than a man; but he frees and fills with a divine potency

[1] Archbishop Leighton's Lectures on St. Matthew's Gospel.

every power and affection. Whenever that exquisite adjustment takes place, of the man's own spirit and life to the spirit and truth of what he teaches, he is recognized by men as a true pastor of souls. Now, although a peculiar preparation is needed for this care of souls, it is a common error to think, that it is entirely, or almost entirely, an intellectual preparation; whereas it is, above all, a *spiritual* preparation. As it is Christ's work, he alone can and must fit a man for it; for neither Augustine, nor Turretin, any more than Plato or Hegel, nor any human instructor, can fit a man to win souls. The Holy Spirit is the entire seminary of these divine germs of power and success in the pastoral work. Christ must breathe upon his disciples, and endue them with power. George Herbert says, "The greatest and hardest preparation is within." It is a mind that lays itself at the foot of the cross, and cries, "Cleanse *Thou* me from secret faults! I would not be paralyzed in my efforts to win souls by the love of any evil thing whatsoever; but I would yield myself up to thee, O divine Master, to use and shape me as thou wilt." It is this humble and self-emptied state that makes a man receptive of higher power; and then God flows in by the influence of his Spirit, and fills the man with power. Then the tongue of flame descends upon him; then men recognize him as a divine messenger; then he will speak to the dying soul of the risen Redeemer with words of faith and power; then he will be the means of kindling in dark spirits the immortal hope of Christ. They will awake to his earnest entreaties, and the Holy Spirit will use him as a powerful instrument to apply to their hearts the renewing word. One man is the pre-ordained instrument of the spiritual welfare of another. The electric current runs from heart to heart. The disciple who brought his friend to Jesus was the appointed means of eternal good to the soul of his friend, and of winning it to God.

§ 44. *Pastoral Visiting.*

The family may be said to be as truly a divine institution as the church; and the church itself is but an extension of the family idea. The Christian church is a large household, a wider brotherhood, a perpetually expanding body of families united in Christ, the Head.

The pastor is peculiarly a leader of families — "*a leader of flocks.*" God himself, in the Psalms, is thus represented as a Shepherd, who "*leads Joseph* (Joseph's household) *as a flock.*"

It is good for the pastor to view his people in this family light, especially in its relations to the duty of pastoral visitation; he should know his people in their own homes, where their true character shows itself; he should appreciate the strength and depth of family ties and sympathies; and he should understand and use them for good.

What is the true idea of a pastoral visit?

President Wayland thus describes it: "The visiting to which I refer is a very different thing. In urging the duty of pastoral visitation, I would suggest that a minister should devote a large portion of his time to the duty of private conversation, with every member of his congregation, on the subject of personal religion. In visiting a family for this purpose, I suppose he should endeavor to converse with every individual separately; or, if this be not possible, that he should set before them all the duty of repentance and faith in Christ, and, if there be no special obstacle, that he should close the interview with prayer. Of course there should be in this nothing stiff, formal, severe, or forbidding. The minister is doing nothing but what his relation to his hearers absolutely requires. They have chosen him to take the care of their souls, and use every means in his power to save them from eternal death. They believe in the truths which he preaches, or they would not

have chosen him to be their minister. If his labors on the Sabbath have been ineffectual, it is certainly reasonable that he should see them in private, and press upon them individually the truths which they have thus far neglected."

We would suggest, as an amendment to that good advice, — good, if it could be carried out, — that the pastoral visit should not be expected, as a rule, to be a strictly religious visit; that there should be no rule in regard to it which could not be departed from; for if there were, it would become a form, and lose its power for good. All spontaneity would be taken out of it, and it might come to such a pass, that many people would avoid their minister when he visited them, or if they should see him, they would shut up their hearts to him, and not appear in their true character. The visit of a minister, like that of any other man, should be, first of all, of a friendly and social nature; for he is a man before he is a minister.

While we do not think that "preaching," technically speaking, should be done in a pastoral visit, yet; it must be said, that this is not a visit of mere ordinary etiquette or friendship; it is the visit of the appointed guide of the souls of a family: and though it cannot always, from obvious circumstances, assume a definitely religious character, and ought never to be made in a perfunctory spirit, as if it were the discharge of an official obligation, it should, nevertheless, be recognized and felt to be *the visit of the pastor*, i. e., of him who is the spiritual guide of the family. When this is generally and clearly understood, the visit will naturally have a certain character and aim; and then the family will be more likely to aid in making the visit one of profit to themselves.

Let us now look at some of the *uses of pastoral visiting*.

1. *To bring the truth to bear upon the soul of individual men.* Truth from the pulpit depends for success upon the receptivity of the hearer's own mind, and this is generally uncertain and precarious; a wind of temptation, a breath

of worldly influence, may dissipate in a moment the good impression of the truth; but private conversation, pressed home with the earnestness of a strong and affectionate will, serves to fix truth; for the impelling power of another nature is added to the impressibility of the hearer's own mind. If, therefore, truth has been sown by the pulpit, it will be found that pastoral conversation has been the great human agency of nourishing the seed sown. Ministers are sometimes surprised that their labored preaching is no more effective: it may be ineffectual because they do not follow it up with personal instruction. They leave the birds of the air to catch up and devour the seed, or the cares of the world to choke it; what different results can they expect? The care of a wounded limb is great, but a wounded spirit how much more a subject of unwearied and tender care. Great wisdom is certainly required to give the truth its personal application in conversation with families and individuals. The simple repetition sometimes of a significant text of Scripture, when it is a word in season, is powerful for good. It is well to store up such inspiring and strengthening texts, to leave as gifts, with a few words of comment and application, in the houses of the people. The scriptural figure is the best as well as most beautiful of sowing the truth, dropping it in every place, in every heart; and even if some seed fails to take root, and perishes, was not that the case with the Great Sower himself?

2. *To win the confidence of the people.* When the minister is seen only in the pulpit on Sunday, he is still a stranger, and his voice is the voice of a stranger; he may be admired and respected, but he cannot be loved, for there must be something personal in the relation to make it a strong one. By visiting his people in their own houses, and entering into their hopes, sorrows, and joys, rejoicing with those that rejoice, and weeping with those that weep, the pastor becomes a man who is sincerely trusted and

loved. Each begins to look upon him as his personal friend. People seeing that he has a sincere interest in them, that he has no selfish end to gain in his intercourse with them, will begin to give him their confidence.

3. *To promote attendance upon public worship*, and attention to all Christian duties. Where the pastor is seen and known familiarly, the people are attracted to follow him to the prayer meeting and the house of God; for this, then, becomes a matter of personal obligation. The father of a family says, "If my minister takes the trouble to come and see me, I will go and hear him." Thus the lower motive may lead to the performing of the higher duty, or, at least, may draw men to the place where they may be spiritually benefited; and the pastor can also, by direct conversation, bring them up to this duty.

A good pastor, too, not merely for the sake of acquiring influence, but from the real love of his people, looks after the good of his flock in temporal matters. Oberlin took a measuring chain and spade in hand, and directed in making a road among the mountains, which opened communication between his obscure village and the outer world, and thus became a benefactor of his people in things they could not deny.

If a pastor does not visit his people, what can he know of their characters and wants, except by hearsay? There may be persons, or families, starving in his parish, of whom he is totally ignorant. The poor are to be searched out, and not merely to be inquired after. A minister who does not continually go around among his people, cannot know all their moral wants and dangers, — the concealed intemperance, profligacy, and vices among them — the spread of depraving opinions, — the temptations of youth. A minister should not be a police officer, or a moral inquisitor, but he should be a true "watchman," and should use all proper diligence and vigilance to detect the presence of evil in the flock he is set over. One may, for example, properly ask and find out about the reading of his people,

— no unimportant source of influence for good or evil, and may counsel and direct in that matter, by the taste for sound and healthy reading among the young. He may give practical hints in relation to anything that will tend to improve his people, and increase their comfort and happiness. A simple suggestion to a poor family in regard to the proper ventilation of a house, or an apartment — the best mode of planting a field, or of making a garden, or of mending a gate, is a kindness in itself, and will build up an influence for good.

4. *To obtain profitable topics for the pulpit.* A man may preach fairly on admitted truths; but if it is seen that his preaching has no particular application to his own people, and to their needs, their interest in him, as an instructor and guide, is gradually undermined; but a sermon which is inspired by a personal conversation, or a pastoral visit, has an element of life in it, which is worth far more than a sermon drawn from books. It meets a real want; it is a vital communication from the speaker to his hearers. Springing up within the circle of the parish, out of its needs and circumstances, it will verify the words of President Wayland, "As the minister looks upon his hearers with the consciousness that he has before him friends with whose moral condition he is familiar, so they feel that they are looking upon a man with whom they are in full sympathy."[1]

5. *To give aim and directness to prayer.* The pastor who knows his people will be led to pray for particular things and for particular persons. He has perhaps experienced great difficulty and decided repulse in reaching certain minds; they are not yet open to the entrance of the truth; they are in wilful darkness; his own efforts to awaken and give light are vain, and his only help is in God; he has something to pray for with all his heart and soul, and not to let God go until he grants his prayer.

[1] Ministry of the Gospel, p. 153.

6. *To quicken the pastor's spirituality.* In this nobly practical part of his work, the deadening influence of his official familiarity with divine truth, finds its counterpoise. He is confirmed in his belief that piety is a real thing; for he is brought daily face to face with undeniable facts, with a primitive faith that has endured trial, that has overcome difficulty, that has been proved in the furnace of affliction. The "Book of Acts" is reënacted constantly before him in the lives of true disciples. He is impressed with the difference, the vast difference, between the believing and the unbelieving man, in circumstances of real trial. His own faith is thus confirmed. He may know some poor woman, who, from her constant study of the Bible and simple trust in Christ, has had the lowness of her mind and estate transformed into something wonderfully refined and heavenly; he may learn celestial wisdom from her conversation. Great originality of religious thought is often found in the humblest walks of life, where the Spirit of God has wrought upon an originally strong nature; where suns and rains of divine influence fall upon a rich soil and it produces fruit spontaneously, and rare fruit it is. Ideas have a natural vividness that seems like a direct inspiration; and indeed in such a case, the mind is primarily taught by the Spirit and the word of God, instead of secondarily by men.

7. *To bear the ministry of the gospel to those who are not able to attend the public service,* — to old people — to confirmed invalids — to those of peculiar mental infirmities, — all of whom should have the gospel preached to them.

8. *To make and keep a society united.* President Wayland says upon this point, "To take the lowest view of the case, it is the most effectual means for keeping a society united."[1] This might be enlarged upon. Ministers who are not good pastors, wonder that with all their study and striving, their society is ever growing smaller; and the

[1] Ministry of the Gospel, p. 148.

cause of this is often found in the fact that the people are tired of waiting to become acquainted with their pastor, and to form some slight bond of personal interest in him.

Some of the *disadvantages* connected with pastoral visiting, which are to be guarded against, are, the sacrifice of time, — the making one's self subject to the charge of partiality, let him try his best to avoid it, — the causing of dissipation of mind, and inability to concentrate the thoughts on study.

We offer two or three practical suggestions in regard to pastoral visiting, although good sense and a little experience are better than advice upon such a point. Chaucer presents us with a fit motto:

> "Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,
> But he ne left nought, for ne rain ne thunder;
> In sickness and in mischief to visite
> The ferrest in his parish, moche and lite
> Upon his fete, and in his hand a staff."

(*a.*) When one becomes a settled pastor, it is indispensable for him to visit the whole parish, as one of his first duties. None of the people should be neglected in this first round of visits, which, if the pastor neglects to make, or delays too long, he loses an advantage difficult to be regained; for the ardor of first love, under too long neglect, cools. "A new comer to a little place, and especially a young minister, runs a great risk of forming friendships too suddenly, which he can only get free from very slowly, and rarely without unpleasant circumstances. His first opinion may come to be very much changed; and at times, people make advances to him, out of curiosity and with a selfish view, whom he afterwards does not find it easy to get rid of, when he can neither like them nor trust them. It would, therefore, be advisable for him to be friendly to every one on the first visit, but not to bind himself to any one; to be

frank and cordial with all, but to keep his mind to himself; what is reserved may be afterwards easily added, but what is let out too much cannot be so easily taken in again."[1]

(*b.*) The pastor would do well to make out an accurate list of his parish, with the name and residence of each individual. These might be arranged systematically, by neighborhoods, for greater convenience in visiting; for it is a great economy of time to take up different sections of the parish at certain seasons of the year, or in having some well-arranged plan. The circumstances of a city or country settlement would of course greatly modify any such plan.

(*c.*) The whole parish should be visited at least once a year; and, if the society is a small one, it may be visited oftener.

(*d.*) A memorandum of every visit should be kept; and this becomes an invaluable private journal. Opportunities for benevolence — special points that have come up in conversation — mental traits brought out — the religious condition of families and individuals — subjects of thought and prayer aroused — these little fragmentary items, gathered here and there, by and by form a rich fund to draw from.

(*e.*) The sick should claim the first attention. The sick should not be neglected, even if all the rest be passed by, or if other duties be unfulfilled.

(*f.*) The visit should not be wearisomely long, and it should not be, on the other hand, so brief and hasty as to have no significance, and leave no impression save that of cold formality. Where there is the prospect of doing good it should not be abridged. Of course good sense and circumstances should govern in each case.

(*g.*) The visit should have, as far as it is possible, some profitable, and better still, religious character. We have remarked upon this, and thrown out the opinion that it is

[1] Manse of Mastland.

not best to preach at such a time, but rather to cultivate a social feeling of confidence between pastor and people; but the visit should not be all consumed in commonplace conversation. The great mass of people are eloquent upon the subject of their bodily, rather than of their spiritual ailments. On this last subject, if it is introduced, the pastor must take the initiative; and he must, above all, in a matter like this, seek the fit moment to converse upon religion. If the pastor has the true spirit, he will neglect no good opportunity that offers itself to improve his people spiritually, and a superior tact in this will guide him. As a general rule, let the pastor strive to leave some message of God in every house he visits, and, like the Saviour, who sowed the seed wherever he went, be ever leading the thoughts of those with whom he talked from temporal to eternal themes, — from the earthly to the heavenly, by imperceptible ways, — let him have this constant aim to do good to the minds of his people.

It is well, even, to make the modes or approaches to religious conversation a subject of thought and study, in order to avoid every appearance of stiffness, formality, or cant. We may study the good art of not being artificial. Particular themes and particular ways of approaching them and presenting them in conversation, are certainly as worthy of the serious reflection of the pastor, as are the themes of the pulpit.

But let a young pastor know beforehand, lest he be discouraged, that he must himself make the beginning in religious conversation, and that he must expect to say nearly all that is said; indeed, he will find comparatively little response to what he says, even from professed Christians — not much beyond certain formal phrases and commonplaces; and this is not because there is no sincere feeling, but because people, generally speaking, are unable to express their thoughts and discuss their feelings on spiritual themes; therefore it is absolutely necessary that the pastor should

make leading remarks, and perhaps think beforehand of special topics.

The pastor should show that he is not trying to pry into the heart's secrets even of a religious nature, but by honest conversation on the things of truth and righteousness, and sometimes by questions kindly put, he should seek to know somewhat of the religious condition of a household. Often, a plain word of counsel in regard to the study of the Scriptures, to attendance upon the church prayer meeting, to carefulness as to the religious instruction of children, faithfulness to the duty of family worship, and of private devotion, the acknowledgment of God's unbounded mercies in a spirit of greater thankfulness and benevolence, — such a word is healthful.

As to ending the pastoral visit with prayer, we do not see how it can always or generally be carried out; yet it may be done whenever it seems fit, and certainly whenever it is requested. The pastor should strive to cultivate the devotional spirit among his people, and to leave the breath of prayer in every house — to teach his people how to pray. The chamber of sickness is a fit place for prayer. The favorable moment should be seized, when the mind is prepared by previous conversation, and the feelings seem to demand the act of prayer, — for the turning to God for wisdom and aid. But prayer is the last thing to be obtruded, or forced upon people. It should be a free act.

Admonition should never be administered, if it is required at all, in the presence of others; neither should parents be talked to in reference to their moral and spiritual duties in a reproving vein, before their children.

A minister, of course, has a right to have his intimate friends, just as any other man has, and to visit some families more than others; but let all, rich and poor, cultivated and ignorant, feel that they have a common friend in their pastor. He must expect to hear complaints in regard to his neglect of pastoral visitation; some are exacting in this

respect; but these complaints will cease when it is known that he has a true affection for his people, and that he means to impart to them all, without respect of persons, in spiritual things.

When there is an especial call for a pastoral visit, let it not be delayed; let everything else wait; a moment rightly used here, is better than days and weeks of attention afterward. And everything stimulates us to be faithful to this duty. President Wayland says, "So far as I have known the events that have led to conversion, I have observed, specially of late, that a much larger number have been led to reflection by private conversation than by any public ministrations."

In conversing with very illiterate, and perhaps degraded people, such as are to be found in our large cities, and almost nowhere else, care should be taken not to talk to them in their own modes of thought and language. "Clergymen and others often, too, make a fearful mistake by talking to the poor in their own language. Talk to them kindly, talk to them as fellow-men and women, talk to them with real sympathy, and you meet with sympathy and respect, nay, more, with real affection from them; but lower yourself to their style of language, and they feel it to be a keen insult, for they know you are stooping to them, not to raise them up to your level, but to bring yourself down to theirs."[1]

In the treatment of the debased poor and outcast of our great cities, much tact is required. Actual want should be at once relieved; but it is not perhaps always well, on every visit, to give money, for then it will be always expected, and the hope of it may produce a false state of mind; but the alms should be given at other times and in other ways. The complaints and bitter remarks of very ignorant and poor people are to be kindly borne, even their occasional hypoc-

[1] Parson and Parish.

risy and want of truth; for these faults, strange as it sounds, may sometimes subsist with good qualities.[1]

Not only the young, thoughtless, impenitent, ignorant, tempted, vicious, need kind personal conversation, admonition, and counsel, but Christians also, at times, need the same. The world entangles them; cares, anxieties, business troubles, ambitions, artificial pleasures, the gains and glare of this world, dazzle and beguile the best minds. The pastor should go around like Christ, the "Good Shepherd," liberating entangled souls from the snares of the world, and giving them comfort, light, and aid. A strong word of hearty faith, of simple trust in the right, will often give the relieving blow to cut a meshed soul free. The seasonable visit of the pastor may sometimes be blessed to the saving of a soul that is trembling on the verge of some great and destroying temptation.

There is more danger from *indolence* in regard to the duty of pastoral visitation than there is from over-zeal and overwork in it. These timely remarks are from the Dean of Westminster's Treatise on the Epistles to the Seven Churches: "Perhaps in our day none are more tempted to measure out to themselves tasks too light and inadequate, than those to whom an office and ministry in the church has been committed. Indeed, there is here to them an ever-recurring temptation, and this from the fact that they do, for the most part, measure out their own day's task themselves. Others, in almost every other calling, have it measured out to them; if not the zeal, earnestness, sincerity, which they are to put into the performance of it, yet at any rate the outward limits, the amount of time they shall devote to it, and often the definite quantity of it which they shall accomplish. It is not so with us. We give it exactly the number of hours which we please. We are, for the most part, responsible to no man; and when laborers thus

[1] Manse of Mastland.

apportion their own burdens, and do this from day to day, how near the danger that they should unduly spare themselves, and make the burdens far lighter than they should have been!"

§ 45. *Care of the Sick and the Afflicted.*

In our Puritan conception of the ministry, we apparently lose some of the advantages of the priestly idea of the ministry, and the immense official authority which this idea gives.

The priest of the Roman Catholic Church, or even, in some instances, the clergyman of the English Established Church, calls upon the sick as an official duty, and the sick person makes confession to him as one who has spiritual authority, or is a kind of mediator between man and God. That may, in some instances, possibly compel a more candid confession of the state of his heart than we can draw forth as simple ministers of the gospel. If one stands as it were in the place of God, being able to absolve the soul from sin, or as one, who, in the name of the church, holds the keys of the eternal world, he may produce such fear in the mind of the sick person that the truth, however painful, shall be forced from him.

The minister of one of our own churches visits the sick rather in the relation of a spiritual friend; and the sick person may or may not feel compelled to reveal his heart, his true spiritual condition, to a human being; and even if the sick man is a true Christian, there may be in his mind a feeling that his dealings at such a time are with God, rather than with man. But this want of official authority may be made up, and more than made up, by the minister's own wisdom, faithfulness, and love of the soul of the sick, winning his free and willing confidence, and leading him to seek spiritual aid and counsel; so that it is only an apparent and not real superiority, which the Roman Catholic

priest possesses over the humblest minister of true piety and fidelity.

As we have before hinted, it is never well to put off a visit upon a sick person, or to delay it so long that it shall look as if one came because there were some immediate danger of death; thus giving the impression that the visit is a compulsory one. When a pastor learns that one of his people is very ill, he should at once go to see him without waiting to be sent for; but he should, nevertheless, endeavor to time his call so opportunely and naturally that the suspicion of its being an extraordinary call shall not be awakened, and thus, in some instances, excite and alarm the sufferer, or in others close the mind to all spiritual benefit.

In the case of the extremely weak and the dying, sometimes all that one can do is to ask, solemnly and affectionately, some very brief question in regard to the state of the soul, and the hope it experiences, or to speak some animating text of Scripture. In visiting the sick, it is often well for the pastor to read from the Bible an appropriate inspiring passage; for the Bible never sounds so sweet or divine as in a sick room; never do the Psalms, the conversations of Jesus in John's Gospel, and the descriptions of the blessed state in the book of Revelation, seem to be so truly the words of God out of heaven, as in the chamber of sickness and of approaching death. Then nothing but the words of God serve.

What one says at such a time should, of course, be pungent and full of Christ. It should be truly preaching the gospel, its hopes and fears, its promises and duties, the need of regeneration, and the forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ, the personal obligation of the soul to God, God's eternal judgment of the soul — great vital truths, uttered in a few simple phrases, without refining upon them; the objective rather than subjective view of them; in a word, *Christ*, the great object of the sick and sinful soul to rest upon, lifted up clearly to view.

Even the believer, in his hour of sickness and feebleness, needs encouragement; and the pastor should not go into the sick chamber as into a hospital, with a lugubrious countenance. He should go there to carry comfort and life, without manifesting lightness and want of appreciation of the circumstances of suffering, and perhaps of the near approach to death. But there should be good cheer in the sick room; and duty might sometimes lead the pastor to draw away the mind for a little time from dwelling morbidly on religious themes. In some diseases especially, there are alternations of feeling; at times the sick think that they should be dwelling upon God every moment, and are not contented unless they are doing so; but is even the healthy Christian mind always, every instant, so intensely taken up with these themes? Must it not sometimes turn to common subjects?

It may be also that even a Christian mind is constitutionally inclined to look upon the dark side of things; and this tendency will probably be increased as the bodily strength diminishes, and as the will is less able to resist this despondent feeling. A person may thus, though a good man, fall almost into hopeless despair concerning his spiritual state, and he may fear to die. The pastor then should recall to him the proofs of a Christian character that have manifested themselves in his life, and, with a kind of holy boldness, should offer a lively defence of himself against himself, not to produce self-confidence, but to awaken in him hope that God will not leave him in the hour of need; that Christ, in whom he has trusted, will not now forsake him. In almost every such case, God vouchsafes light to the soul before death; but still there are instances where the best Christians die under a cloud.

A pastor may also encourage a good man who is in this dark state, by saying to him, that perhaps God may permit this darkness in his case, in order to instruct and encourage other Christians. They will say, there is our brother, whose

whole life has spoken for the faith; we have seen his self-sacrificing spirit; we know the love there is in him; and yet he is permitted to lie in his last hours under a deep shadow of doubt and fear. Let us, then, hope for ourselves, although the light given us is often faint and feeble. Let us not trust to outward manifestations and feelings, but to deeper principles of faith, and of the life of God within the soul.

Those, however, are peculiar cases, and, as a general rule, it is always safe to point the soul to Christ for trust and hope; to endeavor to produce true humility, and to take away the grounds of self-confidence.

Some Christians, as well as other men, have strong fears of physical death; and it is in that case needful for the pastor to stimulate the mind, "to raise the spirit above the dust," to fix it upon the invisible and eternal, — upon that "everlasting life," which a true hope in Christ gives.

The sick room and dying bed of the Christian is the antechamber of heaven; where the pastor may learn more, and see deeper into heavenly things, than anywhere else on earth. How great a privilege to be permitted to stand by and see the glory of God! One feels that instead of coming to aid others, he is there himself to learn.

The most trying part of the pastoral work is the preparing of the impenitent mind for death. How much of truth, firmness, faithfulness, faith, patience, and love are here required! This is, indeed, the touchstone of the pastor's faith and character. There is a deep-wrought feeling in the church that death-bed repentances are for the most part untrue; and this is a healthful sentiment in one sense; for the *life* manifests the child of God; but we may carry this feeling too far, and forget the infinite mercy of God, and also his infinite power, which is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto him. We should never give up the truth of the possibility of the salvation of any soul so long as life lasts; even as the saving look of the Redeemer fell upon the

expiring thief at his side. The patience of love, and the hope of faith, then, for the sinner, should be literally unlimited. Yet the treatment of a sick or dying man, whose heart is hardened in impenitence, or who is a decided opposer of the truth, is a difficult matter. To argue upon doctrinal points with him is usually futile. Controversy produces irritability and passion in the sick rather than conviction. One may strive in direct or indirect ways to discover what is the false ground of confidence to which they who die impenitent cling, and this should be taken away, and the truth clearly, firmly, kindly presented.

The insensible soul should be awakened, and made to realize eternity. But often, where it can be, prayer is the only and the last resort in the sick room; and in prayer one can pour out all his heart, his fears, thoughts, and desires concerning the sick; and it is right to do so, for God would surely desire to bless, and would the more willingly bless so earnest a prayer. And if anything will awaken fervent prayer, it is to see a soul trembling on the edge of eternity, and unprepared for the change. Then a minister feels his responsibility to be too great for him to bear; he must go to God, and lay the burden upon him. An English clergyman bears testimony to the fact that sick and dying persons are often more conscious of what is going on about them than we are aware of. He gives two or three actual instances of apparently unconscious and dying persons hearing perfectly the prayers repeated by their bedsides, and profiting by them to the good of their souls, as they have testified on partial recovery; and the writer adds, "Acting upon this conviction, I never lose an opportunity of praying by the bedside of the sick, even when the patient is himself unconscious; and not only in my form of expression do I pray for, but pray with the sufferer." [1]

The pastor sometimes finds a peculiar trial with a class

[1] Parson and People, p. 198.

of persons of a negative type of character, who, when brought to lie upon a feeble and dying bed, are transfixed with fears, and are willing to give implicit assent to everything that is said to them. This is the case often with those whose lives have been amiable, but who have exhibited no decided change of heart, or no positive religious character. They listen with eagerness, and they apparently assent to the truth; but it is difficult to know whether it is a true or false sorrow. One has, in such cases, to exercise mingled firmness and gentleness. The heart should be proved; it may be even needful to arouse by words of searching truth. One should endeavor to draw forth some sincere statement of the true state of the heart, however incoherent and crude it be. It may be discovered that the heart, though troubled, really rests on some error, some false security. How difficult it often is to drive the soul from this refuge of lies, to lay hold upon the true hope in Christ!

For weeks and weeks a faithful pastor may perceive no change, no sign of movement toward a higher foundation. There is, perhaps, even the same feeble hope expressed in the goodness of one's intentions, in the general outward morality of one's life, or in the indiscriminate and unintelligent mercy of God. The soul, too, has incredible powers of resistance, even in the weakest natures, and to the last moment of life it may not yield its will to the will of God. The power of human pride partakes of the soul's immortal nature. The pastor should be aware of the fact, that in the very process of disease itself, a placid state of feeling is sometimes produced in the mind, a dreamy tranquillity, which has no thought of the future, and is willing to let body and soul go without further care. It becomes one's duty to discriminate between the effect of such a dissolution of the powers of nature and the real tranquillity that true faith brings.

The effect even of anodynes upon the mind is sometimes great, and may produce happy feelings, and delightful views

of heaven, of which, if the sick person perchance recovers, he may retain no recollection.

Let one endeavor to turn the mind of the sick and dying away from earthly and human supports, to rest upon Christ. Speak inspiringly; hold the Saviour up to view; be an ambassador of mercy and hope; let words of divine grace fall from your lips — the words of life.

And the pastor should not neglect the convalescent, but should continue to visit them faithfully during all the period of their recovery; for in this he shows true friendship, and not the mere pressure of professional obligation.

One should make a definite preparation for the visitation of the sick; he should mark the passages of Scripture to be read, and think over the remarks he will make, so that they may be plain and condensed, easy to be understood, and yet full of solid truth. They should be put in such a shape that the feeble mind may readily retain them and reflect upon them; that they may, so to speak, hold them in their weak hands. In concluding this theme, we would quote the practical counsel of Jeremy Taylor, which should be impressed on the minds of a Christian people: "Let the minister of religion be sent to, not only against the agony, or death, but be advised with in the whole course of the sickness;" for while the mind is still clear, and capable of thought and voluntary action, then the preaching of the Word may be signally blest, when sickness closes the door to the world, and shuts up the soul to God and eternal things.

We would now say a word concerning the visitation of the *afflicted*, who are suffering by reason of the loss of friends, or any other trouble. In such seasons the pastor may make swift strides into the affections of his people; and the truth, too, has then a subduing power that it rarely has at other times,

although those times of affliction also draw upon a minister's own strength, and sometimes they seem to sap his very life. There is, however, a simple secret which a pastor learns, though not perhaps until after a considerable experience, i. e., that he is not called upon to furnish all the feeling, but rather to guide and regulate it; that he need not exhaust himself to provide artificial emotions, but that a few words of Christian sympathy, such as a true pastor will have at his command, are sufficient to touch the overcharged spring in the heart of the afflicted, and it will find relief in its own expression and flow.

Affliction is the time when God opens the heart, when he ploughs the heart's depths; and then the precious seed may be sowed therein: but still it is important to bear in mind that affliction is not the *cause* of good to a soul, although affliction may be made, by God's grace, the *occasion* of inestimable good; for affliction, without the higher influences of the truth and the Spirit, usually injures more than it benefits a man. "*The peaceable fruits of righteousness*" are afterwards yielded to those "*who are exercised thereby*," who are rightly influenced by them. The Scriptures speak of two kinds of sorrow, very different in their nature, which, in truth, lie infinitely apart, — the sorrow felt by a worldly mind at the loss of the things it holds dear, and the godly sorrow which leads to a repentance that needs not to be repented of; and of this last are those of whom the Lord said, "*Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*"

A pastor should therefore keep the great truth in mind, that he can expect no spiritual good to spring from the afflictions of his people unless they are received in faith, unless the truth is mingled with them. "*Every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.*" The soul, while in an agitated state, and taken up wholly and selfishly with its sorrow, cannot receive the pure word of truth; it must be brought to calm reflection and right thoughts of God. The pastor,

therefore, has a double duty in visiting the afflicted, first, to manifest true Christian sympathy with the sorrowing, to "*weep with them that weep*," and, secondly, to lead their souls to a higher Christian consolation.

When a pastor visits a family in great affliction, he sometimes enters into a scene of moral chaos. It may be, for the most part, a household of unchristianized and undisciplined hearts, that are thrown into violent commotion and unwonted conditions; the grief is passionate, unreflective, and unsubmissive; the whole current of feeling is turned upon the memory of the deceased friend; he is exalted into something almost superhuman; nothing can be spoken but of his unparalleled worth and goodness; he is assigned a high place among the blest; and there can be no thought or conversation but of him. Now, to bring such passionate and excited minds to look to God rather than to man, and to view the religious obligations of the chastisement, is a difficult and delicate task, for natural instincts and family affections, good but undisciplined, obscure the truth.

But the minister, kind and sympathizing though he be, forbearing though he may be to human sorrow, and even to human infirmities, should not forget that he is the ambassador of God, and he should lead the sorrowing firmly away from false sources of comfort to the true and Eternal Source.

The pastor should also strive to prevent the afflicted from nursing their grief, from offering sacrifice to it, from indulging in what is called "the luxury of woe," which only unnerves the mind from doing its duty. He should show the real impiety of this course, and should teach those affections that have been prostrated in the dust to begin to reach upward to Christ, and to twine upon him, the Almighty Friend and Sustainer. He should teach the afflicted to endure their sorrows with patience and calm fortitude; he should set forth the Christ-like glory of the passive virtues; he should show that the Christian life lies

through sufferings; he should point the sorrowful to "*the Man of sorrows*," and should show them that "the highway of the cross, which the King of sufferings hath trodden before us, is the way to ease, to a kingdom, and to felicity."[1]

It is both wise and Christian to attend to the *temporal* wants of those who are in affliction — to do all possible acts of kindness; and where there is real want, to carry food, raiment, money, in one's hands; thus showing that the interest is not a merely official one.

Frequent visits, and marked kindness on the part of the pastor in times of affliction, bind the hearts of a family to their pastor by the strongest bonds of gratitude. Words, thoughts, and acts, which, perhaps, are not hard for him, which are little things to do, yet seem great to sorrowing hearts, and strike deep in them, and take lasting root. The strongest prejudices and aversions are then overcome, and even the stubborn will of hardened impenitence often gives way before this power of Christian kindness and love.

As to the thoughts and *topics* that a minister should introduce in visiting families and persons in affliction, those are, of course, modified by the circumstances of the case; but still there are certain topics always right and essential at such seasons. It is always right to speak of the *sovereignty and love of God in affliction;* and the truth may be dwelt upon that it is God who afflicts, and yet not willingly, but for the real good of the sufferer. The reasons of the affliction are in goodness — for the penitential humbling of the selfish soul — for the trial of faith — for the growth of holiness — for moral education and refining — for the weakening of sin — for the loosening of the world's grasp on the spirit. And even in cases where there seems to be no ray of hope, where the hand of God does not appear to be at all in the sorrow, where death is caused by human folly, or vice, or crime, the relation of God's ordering will to such an

[1] Jeremy Taylor's Holy Dying. Works, vol. i. p. 547.

event, and to all events, whether good or bad, should be shown, and that the good of all is truly subserved; that the particular loss is swallowed up in the general gain; and so far as the evil-doer himself is concerned, that he is to be left in the hands of his Creator, his best Friend, who knows his whole history, who will judge him righteously.

There is, at all events, *a recompense to the righteous*, to the believing and submissive soul, somewhere in the universe, if not here, yet hereafter; and all such shall see it, and bless God, for "*many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all;*" and "*all things shall work together for good to them that love God.*"

Lead the afflicted soul to God, and leave it there, to the deep and healing consolations which can alone flow from the comforting hand of the Father. The name of Jesus to the sufferer is like balm, or like ointment, poured out in the house of affliction, that gives refreshment, strength, and new life to the weak soul ready to perish.

Exhortations, also, to sincere *contrition and repentance of sins;* to *prayerfulness*, and to the performance of all religious duties, are right and essential to any idea of pastoral faithfulness at such a time. "*Is any afflicted, let him pray:*" affliction is the time for the taking up of spiritual exercises, for the beginning, or the reconsecration of a religious life.

In true repentance, in a pure turning to God, the Holy Spirit, who is the real and only Comforter, can alone be found; and the pastor should labor to make manifest to those in affliction that the foundation of peace is in God alone, in everlasting reconciliation with him; that it should be laid within, not in things without.

"*To him that is afflicted pity should be shown.*" All the expressions of a simple and genuine sympathy are deeply appreciated at such a time; and every alleviating circumstance or fact of the affliction itself, from which comfort can be drawn, every mingling of mercy in the cup of

sorrow, may be noticed and made use of; only let the pastor not suffer the afflicted to rest in those things, but let him lead the soul to spiritual and divine consolations; and, lastly, that *joy* which the Christian, and the Christian pastor, has in his heart, should be freely expressed; for Christian pastors are "the helpers of the joy of their people" in times of trouble and darkness. They have a joy which they share with Christ, and which the world cannot touch; which is the gift of the Spirit of God; which overcomes sorrow, death, and the changes of time, and which is able to impart joy and comfort to those who are in affliction.

§ 46. *The Treatment of different Classes.*

The sources of opposition to divine truth are so varied, and are so often found in different tempers of mind, and in subtle moral causes, that they lie more exclusively in the domain of the pastoral, than of the theological responsibility of the minister. There is something radically wrong, doubtless, in the heart of every opposer of divine truth; but the hostility which springs from a corrupt heart, and which is a part of the life of a wicked mind positively antagonistic to every revelation of a supernatural will, is a thing different from that negative disbelief which springs from purely intellectual difficulties in minds it may be of acute and superior powers. This admits, to a certain extent, of human medication, or, at least, allows of the operation of a large charity. The difficulties of such minds should be kindly recognized and patiently reasoned with, for they may be difficulties that can be removed.

1. *The unbelieving and impenitent.*

The theologian meets the doubt as it presents itself in its objective aspects; but the pastor looks behind the doubt, and searches carefully into its deeper subjective causes and

conditions. His aim is not to refute error, not to conquer opposition, but to save the erring soul. A wise and Christ-like treatment of doubt sometimes leads to the firm establishment of faith; for a sincere doubt expresses, on the whole, a condition of mind more hopeful, than a lifeless acquiescence or indifferentism; and a sceptic, if he is a truth-seeker, may be in one stage of development toward a larger and higher faith. The very progress of the human mind, coming in apparent collision with the facts of Christianity, produces agitation in souls not as yet profoundly established in faith, like a strong wind that blows against the current, and raises commotion in the waters.

The unbelief which springs from the progress of science, and the widening of the intellectual vision, should be met with the same broad intelligence as that which originates it. The peculiar form of denial in the present age, having abandoned the region of the supernatural, rests almost entirely in the region of the pure intellect and in the positive facts and conclusions of the natural reason, and it must be overcome by a faith that fully recognizes and admits the difficulties in scientific minds; that no longer narrowly contends against the advance of knowledge; that is itself philosophical, in harmony with the progress of true science, and that is more earnest, more self-sacrificing, more efficient in good to humanity than is scientific doubt. Let there be no longer this jealous and unreasonable antagonism between theology and science; where they move in the same planes they must necessarily harmonize, and where they move in different planes they need not come into collision; for they are no more essentially opposed to each other than sky and earth — than those mysterious celestial orbs, which roll in space and light the darkness, are opposed to the movement and welfare of our own better known terrestrial system.

But the Christian pastor, while culpable if he is not an intelligent and studious man, and if he does not strive, as

far as his means allow him, to keep himself, in some sense, abreast of the scientific progress of the age, should, at the same time, earnestly keep himself in the supernatural sphere of faith, and not come down entirely to the level of human science, seeing that, by doing so, he yields too much; he loses his hold of the true overcoming power, — the power that is stronger than knowledge. By maintaining his hold of the supernatural, he maintains his superiority to scepticism, which, though it claims to be theistic, and even Christian, is often, in its essence, thoroughly pantheistic and material, denying spirit, denying the spirituality and personality of God.

The pastor, as a practical matter, will find a class of persons in his congregation who may be called "natural unbelievers;" who will always see the objections to a truth before they see the reasons for it; who are morbidly cautious in arriving at a conclusion; who are ever striving, but never able, to come to the knowledge of the truth; who are men of little imagination and power of vivid feeling, though by no means lacking in kind feeling or uprightness of character. They may be good fathers, brothers, sons. Such persons are not always to be reached by direct assaults; they are cool fencers, and are not to be overcome by off-hand argument. They receive nothing upon authority, but must come to the truth, if at all, through their own mental convictions. This is a type of mind not uncommon in New England, and should be wisely and thoughtfully treated. Often pure reasoning, the wrestling of mind with mind, the meeting of argument with argument, the vigorous wielding of logic and learning, giving blow for blow, is the best method of procedure with such minds. There is a vast deal of infidelity which cannot stand an instant before bold and skilful argument. But, in most cases, having obtained the good will and personal respect of such a man, having fallen into terms of easy fellowship with him, the pastor should strive to find out the true source of his dis-

belief, if it is in some sense constitutional, or the result of ignorance, or the fruit of wilful opposition and depravity. It will be generally discovered that there is much absolute ignorance of religious things, and of the Scriptures even, in the most intellectual unbeliever, and that the habit of doubting has kept the light from his mind, and his mind from the light. It is always well, as a friend, to request such a person to *read the New Testament carefully through*, book by book, leaving him entirely to himself and to the influences of the Spirit of God. Often the intellectual conversion, at least, of such a mind, if not his real salvation, will be the result of this simple but profound remedy.

Unbelief, however, lies more commonly in the *moral* than intellectual nature; and every man, if he will, can believe, else there would be no responsibility to believe, else faith would not be a universal obligation. Therefore the unbeliever should be led to see that faith does not lie altogether in the sphere of reason; that it is a more inward sense and spiritual perception of truth, and that God and eternal things cannot be entirely comprehended by the intellect, so that the *spiritual* nature may be awakened, and the need of God felt. We cannot err here. Every soul needs God for its knowledge, true life, and peace.

One sometimes, however, though rarely, meets with a mind in which the very capacity of faith seems to be wanting, the foundations of belief to be gone. This is the legitimate and terrible consequence of a man's having deliberately adopted some material theory, and carrying it out to its boldest logical results. Such a mind comes at length into a condition which we conceive to be, or to have become, absolutely diseased; although it is still responsible for having brought itself into this deplorable state; and such a mind should be treated, in some sense, *as a diseased mind;* for faith is the normal and sound condition of the mind. The feeblest germ of faith in such a mind, of belief

in anything, in goodness, in man, in affection, in patriotism, in outward nature, in art, in business, should be carefully nursed, and thus it may be gradually drawn or impelled to a faith in higher things. Christ is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, and we, ourselves, should have a practical, unswerving faith in that truth.

But that class of intellectual opposers and unbelievers is small in comparison with that great common class of *impenitent unbelievers* to which these and many more belong, who are as yet in an unconverted state, who are untouched by the power of divine truth, and who are, apparently, "*without hope and without God in the world.*" In treating such souls, the pastor, whether in the pulpit or out of it, is called upon to preach the truth plainly; and, as one of the most effectual means of awakening unspiritual minds to a consciousness of their state, he should present the claims of the *divine law* — he should preach to the conscience. It was the apostolic method to lay open to sinful men the purity, perfection, and spirituality of the law, written not only in the Word, but "*on the fleshly tablets of the heart*," and the nature of the law's transgression, which is sin; for the law comes, in the order of time, if not in the order of conscious experience, before the gospel, — repentance before the kingdom of heaven. The great overwhelming sense of the disapproval of God should be aroused, — of God present with the soul, looking on the soul, judging the soul, showing it in the clear light of eternity, its perverse contradiction of the righteous law in its own nature, forcing it to pronounce self-condemnation. A true sense of *sin* is to be awakened; and it is an act of love to convince the sinner of his sin, of his want of holy love toward God, and of his selfishness toward man; and then, through the law, he may be led to feel the *need of Christ* as a divine Redeemer. The pastor should address strong, clear words to the moral sense of the impenitent, not merely sensational and terrifying words, but words that reach the conscience, that move

the innermost mind, and that, by the grace of God, lead a man to smite upon his breast, and cry, "*Unclean, unclean; God be merciful to me a sinner!*" The impenitent should be led to see that Omnipotence cannot save a man who wilfully remains in his sins; but that while he thus consciously continues in sin, chooses sin, prefers sin, he is "*condemned already.*"

The soul that is wholly destitute of the love of God, is thereby, in the nature of things, prevented from coming to God, and from knowing and enjoying him; and it is, in fact, "*dead in trespasses and in sins.*" But the truth that such a soul is capable of recovery, that God loves it, and would have every man repent and live, should lead the pastor, in the spirit of Christ, to seek the impenitent soul, for he cannot expect that the impenitent soul will seek him. He should search out the soul in its deepest refuges, delusions, and hiding-places. The true pastor's faith and hope in regard to *every soul* are invincible. Some souls must be plucked "*as brands from the burning,*" — as one, at personal risk, enters a burning house amid fire and smoke to save life. Love is bold.

2. *The inquirer.*

We are prevented, by want of space, from discussing the interesting theme of *Revivals*, which are, if pure and spiritual, not only scriptural, but, as might be shown, beautifully philosophical; and we must content ourselves with briefly describing one soul who is moved upon by the Holy Spirit, and making it to stand as a type of that class, which, seen in wide-spread reformatory movements of the Spirit upon men's minds, presents features often in the highest degree grand and impressive. We will, however, remark in respect to revivals in America, that, from the earliest times, a more simple and primitive state of society in this country, the predominance of the democratic element, the absence of caste and hierarchical forms of church

government, have enabled religious feeling to flow from heart to heart, and have thus been favorable to revivals of religion. We should expect revivals to take place in America more readily than in the Old World. Our ancestors, having come to these shores for the truth's sake, regarded truth with supreme devotion. It was the chief concern with them to know and obey the truth. The Bible was their constant study. In addition to that, our fathers had a peculiar and almost apostolic reliance upon the power of prayer. They believed in direct answers to prayer. Everything was brought to God. They went to him in undoubted faith, as to a Ruler and Father, for all questions that regarded the state and the family, but above all for those things that pertain to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. Those principles continue to be strong in the minds of their descendants, and therefore we should expect that the gospel in this free land would have its primitive revival power. Old ecclesiastical forms are done away, the stratifications of society are broken up, rigid theological philosophies have a constantly diminishing force; there are still, however, a stir and deep activity of mind on religious questions, and the heart comes freshly in contact with truth. We should expect, therefore, in the future, a development of revival power from the gospel even greater than in the past, as this vital contact of truth with the human heart becomes more unobstructed, as the nature and love of God in the gospel are better understood, as Christ is made the central source of spiritual life, and as the truth of the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit are more profoundly believed and appreciated. Let us labor for revivals; and yet let us not strive for the direct end of revivals, but rather for saving souls and increasing the love of God in the hearts of men, and thus labor for revivals as the natural harvests of good husbandry. There are pastors whose ministries may be called perpetual revivals, deep, quiet, simple, in which souls are continually born into the kingdom of God, without special

excitement or display of means. This natural kind of revival, without spasmodic effort, or extraordinary manifestations, is the best; it is a harmonious coöperation with the Spirit of God, bringing new life into a church and people, and producing fruit as in a field, in its own order and season.

But to proceed with the theme in hand. It may be laid down as a starting point, that under the Christian system, Christ is the source of all true spiritual life; that "*in him we have redemption;*" that in him dwell the springs of redeeming power; and that it is by coming to him through faith, or by a believing union with him, a soul obtains forgiveness of sins and eternal life. "*Through him we both have access by one spirit unto the Father.*" "*He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*" The Son reveals to us the Father, makes the invisible visible, and the inaccessible accessible, brings God near to us, and forms the divine "way, and truth, and life;" so that by union with Christ by faith, or by receiving him in all his relations to us as Redeemer, Teacher, and Lord, the soul joins itself to God, and finds pardon and life. "*Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.*" Whether this mystery of the grace of God in Christ is explicable or not, Christ is the door that opens to everything in the spiritual life, to all its hopes. Christ is set before us as the open way by which a sinful man may come to God, and receive entire justification, and begin a truly righteous life.

We may suppose, then, that the Holy Spirit, through the power of the truth, has led the impenitent soul to see its sins in the light of a pure and spiritual law; to feel its need of higher help; to be sincerely inquiring after the way of life; to be earnestly seeking the salvation of God.

Why does not this soul at once find Christ the *present* Redeemer, and by simple faith lay hold upon this new life

promised in the gospel? Why does it not obey the invitation "*come unto me*," for by coming to Christ one comes to God, who alone has, and can give, righteousness? The door is open, the way is straight, what hinders the soul from entering in and finding peace? We answer, its own self-delusions, hinderances, and difficulties, — in a word, its real *unbelief*.

One of the most common of these difficulties in the mind of the inquirer arises, —

(*a.*) *From a captious, rather than true thinking, on spiritual things.* Through a questioning and argumentative rather than simple state of mind, one who is truly awakened may rush, by a kind of fatality, upon the metaphysical difficulties of spiritual truth. It might be laid down at the beginning, that there could not be a true religion which is entirely comprehensible, or without the possibility of awakening doubts. No true religion is conceivable which does not involve a conflict with the finiteness of the human intellect; and in dealing with God, we come to a point where we must plunge into the abyss of the unknown. But instead of walking in the path of a *reasonable faith* clearly pointed out to him, the inquirer enters into questionings and devious paths. He gets entangled in difficulties respecting the method of conversion, — in the divine and human agencies that are concerned in it. If the Holy Spirit is the author of regeneration, he conceives that it is impossible for him to obey the command to believe and go to Christ. It is true that God alone has power to convert a soul; that so deadened is the will by sin, that the creative power of God must infuse new life into our spiritual powers; but God "*commandeth all men everywhere to repent*," and calls on all to believe in him whom he has sent; and though we cannot make ourselves independent of God in any act, in the least act, so in the greatest act, to turn from the service of sin to the service of God, we cannot act without God; yet if a mind will simply seek to obey God, God will coöperate

with his endeavor, and give him all needed assistance. Coming to Christ in the way of his freedom, he will have the Holy Spirit to help him to come; but consciously and deliberately refusing to obey God, he will not attain unto him; for God will surely never use his power to force him to obey. The Holy Spirit is a persuasive influence, and works in the way of our perfect freedom, even, to represent it feebly, as one mind works upon another.

Granted, then, the weakness of our sin-corrupted nature to throw off sin and come to God, — to God in Christ, — yet God has promised to be with every sincere inquirer of the way of life, every true seeker, every one who will honestly receive the truth. God may be thus said to be always striving with man's spirit to lead it to Christ. Even as the Spirit of God is, in one sense, diffused throughout the works of the natural creation in every tree, plant, and organized existence, producing and sustaining life, so his Spirit is everywhere present, working in his spiritual creation, and in all hearts. We should not doubt the presence of the divine Spirit in any man's soul; and the fact of one's being an inquirer after divine things, is proof sufficient of the presence of the inworking Spirit in the heart; and the pastor should say that to the inquirer, and should tell him that he has but to follow those higher promptings and they will surely lead him to Christ; for this is the result, which, above all others, the Holy Spirit is striving to bring about, and would not strive were men entirely willing. How can it then be conceived, except by the ingeniousness of a self-deceiving mind, that the renovating Spirit, sent expressly by God to draw to Christ, is an obstacle to any man's coming to Christ? There must be some other obstacle. If a man is but willing to come, and will come, he has all the power of God to help him to come.

In regard to the doctrine of *election*, which is involved in this difficulty respecting the Holy Spirit's operations, it does not present, at the present day, so common an obstacle

as it did formerly with those educated under the intensely doctrinal preaching of New England, and we will not dwell upon it. It offers no difficulty when rightly viewed; and surely this profound New-Testament doctrine should not be given up through a weak sympathy; for, intelligently regarded, it is a glorious doctrine; in fact, the foundation of Christian hope. It tends to produce both humility and hope. In the words of the apostle, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.*" Dr. Chalmers was accustomed to say that "he was, with Jonathan Edwards, a necessitarian;" but he added, "I would always wish to be borne in mind a saying of Bishop Butler, that we have not so much to inquire what God does, as what are the duties that we owe to him;" and thus the pastor should teach this doctrine practically, in connection with our obligations to God, in connection with Christ, and in relation to the whole scope and freedom of the gospel, addressed as it is sincerely to every soul for whom Christ died. That is the way Paul originally taught it, who was proving to the Jews that they were not alone the elect people of God, but that all who are in Christ, — the children of Abraham by faith, are truly chosen unto eternal life, are the elect people of God. They are those "*who are written in the Lamb's book of life*," who are saved by his work and mediation. God is blessedly sovereign in spiritual things; but it is the sovereignty of the Father, in connection with the love of the Son, and the work of the Spirit.

We cannot know the secret history of a single soul, and the foundations of its responsibility are lost to our view; and how much less can we know the deep counsels of God and the grounds of his action toward any soul, excepting that we have a general belief in the perfect goodness of all that he does; we should, therefore, teach this doctrine in

close connection with free and sincere invitations of the gospel, interpreting God by himself. We should avoid as much as possible in our dealing with inquiring souls the speculative side of truth, and of this truth; for on its practical side there is no difficulty. This doctrine is really for the mature Christian to contemplate, and the simple inquirer cannot possibly have the same comprehension of it, or sympathy with it; when he grows into the spiritual stature of the apostle, he will love this truth, and find in its greatest difficulties his highest places of satisfaction and delight.

(*b.*) *From wishing to know more of spiritual things before coming to Christ.* This belongs to the same class of obstacles and mental hinderances as the previous difficulty. The inquirer desires to know more about the unseen world of faith, and to act intelligently. He is not yet clear upon all the doctrines of Christianity; how can he then become a Christian? It is, indeed, right to desire to know the truth, to obtain all the light one can; but to know all before one believes, and is a Christian, is a premature wish. One is by no means permitted to enter the kingdom of heaven and survey it with a cool curiosity, before entering it by the humble door of repentance and faith.

He that doeth the will shall know of the doctrine; he cannot enter by the door of knowledge; he cannot gain insight into spiritual things by a mental effort; even as Christ said to Peter, "*Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*" It is for one, first of all, ignorant as he may be, wanting all that God can alone give, to come to Christ as Teacher, and learn of him; and whether he has more or less light, as a sinner he should come trustfully to Christ for light and life, and all things. Questions about knowledge and experience, light and peace, hope and happiness, and every previous manifestation of what really belongs to the Christian life, are not of primary importance to the inquirer; and darkness of mind upon any doctrine, forms

really no obstacle to one's coming to Christ, but is the great reason *why* he should come. One should do those things that he does know, and then he will know more. There may be many doctrines of Christianity that one does not understand, as was the case with the earliest Christians, who did not sometimes clearly apprehend the divinity of the Lord, and yet he may be able to repent of his sins and exercise a simple trust in Christ.

(*c.*) *From an apprehension that something more must be done by him in way of preparation before coming to the Saviour.* He has such an exalted conception of the Christian character, and he feels himself to be so far from this high excellence, that he has much to do before he can presume to hope to be a Christian. He has, as it were, to level a mountain. He must make himself a Christian before he can, through coming to Christ, begin to be one. He must be rid of many faults and sins before he can dare to apply to God. He must fit himself to come to God and be saved. When, therefore, he does come to Christ (if we could make the supposition), he is, in fact, independent of Christ's aid, for he has done the work for himself. "*Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.*" To be a Christian is but to begin to serve God, trusting in Christ; and if one is not willing to take Christ at the beginning, at the first step in true goodness, he can hardly hope to obtain him and his salvation. "Just as I am, without one plea," is the sinner's watchword.

(*d.*) *From a real unbelief in the necessity of Christ's intercession.* God is a common Father, and why may not any human soul come and cast itself directly upon God's fatherly love, and let the Christian plan of saving through Christ, go by? The truth might be brought home to such a mind, that it could not have discovered that God is "love;" that he is a Father, ready to receive the prodigal back to his love, if Christ had not revealed this. That was just what the Son of God came into the world to do. That is the truth of

Christianity. If men would themselves come to the Father, Christ had not died, and there would be no need of the gospel.

The incarnation, sufferings, and death of the Son of God, were not, reverently to say it, designed to shut up the way of salvation to one exclusive method; but were they not intended to bring men to God by the only way possible? Were they not God's consummate method of love, to effect the object? They took place in order to open to men the way of reconciliation to God, to prove God's love and willingness to receive erring men, to give them confidence to come to God in Christ, although sinners. Let us be sure that if men would of themselves return to their heavenly Father, and be obedient and holy men from the heart, Christ would not have come to earth and hung on the cross. It would have been a needless sacrifice. But God knew the depth of sin, and the depth of men's alienation from him. He knew that men had forsaken God, and that they would not repent of their sins and do holily, had he not brought to bear, through his Son, the powerful agencies of his love and Spirit.

Neither would repentance alone without Christ be sufficient to save men; for even the natural mind, when it thinks, perceives that though it may sincerely strive to do good, there is an obstacle in the way of the transgressor's truly coming to God, which is to be first removed; and the great demand of the human heart has ever been, "*Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?*" The reinstatement and vindication of the divine law of right and holiness in the soul itself, which the sinner has consciously and deliberately broken, are needed. Men feel that they have sinned, sinned against God, sinned against their true and higher nature, and are thus liable to woe and death. Sin inflicts a wound which is immedicable by human means, for sin carries no hope of future restoration within itself. A sense of guilt hangs over the soul. This inevitably separates between the

soul and God. There must be *the forgiveness of sin*, and the taking away of its condemnation and power, before there can be real peace. "Repentance," Joubert finely says, "is the effort of the soul to throw off its natural corruptions;" but it is faith alone that enables it successfully to do so. Through Christ's perfect obedience in his human nature of the divine law, and his perfect sacrifice for sin, this corruption of sin in our nature is removed, and its just fear done away; and not only the power of sin is broken, but a new principle of holy life is implanted; for Christ came to give "*remission of sins*," and also "*to destroy sin in the flesh*." Though it is a mystery of love and grace, the great obstacle of *sin*, past and present, is taken away by our appropriation through faith of Christ's mediation for sin.

He, therefore, who truly desires to come to the Father, should rejoice that Christ has opened the way for him to do so; that he has removed every obstacle. "*I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me*." The calm words, "*we have peace in believing*," and "*there is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus*," cannot apply to those persons who think they can come, or have come, to God, without Christ; who seek for peace simply in the good of their own minds, and not in first trusting the goodness and righteousness of God.

(*e.*) *From supposing that in view of such truths as the great guilt of sin, and the stupendous retributions of eternity, one should be more affected and alarmed than he is.* One cannot come to Christ and be saved because he does not feel more deeply. He should be brought, he thinks, into a lively distress of mind, and thus be driven by his distress to Christ for relief. He would have emotions deep enough to prove to himself that his soul is moved by God, — pangs that are in some measure commensurate with his sinful condition.

He *should* be deeply moved in view of such truths; and if there is anything which will awaken in the soul the most poignant anguish, it is the view of its unsatisfactory rela-

tions to God, of its own sin. But does God tell us how much or how little distress one must experience before he does his simple duty? We are indeed told that we must have repentance; but what is repentance (μετάνοια) in its essence? It is "change of mind" from that which is evil to that which is good, from that which is unholy to that which is holy. It is a moral act. Christian repentance involves feeling because it involves the heart as well as the intellect, conscience, and will. It is such a heartfelt view of our sins, and such a willingness to make confession of them to God, as to lead us to forsake them utterly. The forsaking of sin, the turning from it to God, with the whole being, is the essence of repentance. Every one who becomes a Christian must be convicted (convinced) of sin, and must be made willing to turn from sin to God; but how singular it is that the thing most repellent to the mind, — pain for its own wrong-doing, — should be made a reason for not obeying God, and coming to him in simple trust. What a degrading conception of God this springs from, as if he were not "love" but "fear," as if he indeed required sacrifice and not mercy.

That which is needed by the seeker after a higher life is not to feel, but to be. It is essential for him to obey and love God, whether he feels more or less; and as Fénelon says, it takes no time to love God. There is no time in eternal things; if God is ever worthy of our love, he is so at this moment, and always. "*He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.*" Let the will of God be done, and let the soul come in penitent faith to its God and Father; that is all that is necessary. Faith rather than feeling is required. The real believer will probably have more feeling, and more poignancy of feeling, after, than before, his conversion; for a more intimate communion with God and holy things opens the heart to the tenderest, profoundest emotion, and often to the greatest distress on account of sin; and yet this is not saying that

true repentance is not commonly accompanied by a profound feeling of sorrow for sin.

(*f.*) *From real unwillingness to incur all the responsibility of becoming a true Christian.* Here will generally be found to be the main stress of the difficulty of inquirers, — a real unwillingness to take up the cross and follow Christ. The heart is a subtle corrupter of the best intentions. One may have even gone so far as to fall upon his knees, and to implore God to change his heart, and to take away his sins, and to make him a true Christian; but at the time he is engaged in this attempt to pray, does he truly desire to have his prayer answered? And what is the obstacle? It may be that he is not yet willing to follow Christ through good and evil report, and all manner of trial, yes, if necessary, to death. That is a searching thought. That is a strange, but not uncommon fact in the history of the soul, of one's praying to be made the child of Christ, and yet down in the secret depths of his heart, *not willing* that his prayer should be heard, not being yet ready to make that entire surrender to Christ, that he is praying God to effect in him. When one comes to Christ it amounts to this, that there is *nothing* he is not willing at the command of God to surrender to Christ, and for Christ's sake. With one man the form of non-surrender may be the strength of the *covetous* principle as it was developed in the young ruler at the touch of Christ, "*he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions;*" with another it is the power of some *evil appetite;* with another it is the *ambitious* principle, or the determination to acquire earthly power, distinction, place; and with another it is the *pride of intellect.* This pride of opinion is not unfrequently found among intellectual men, and is strong enough sometimes to drive a man of fine mind far from Christ into the frozen regions of infidelity. He says there have been great thinkers who have rejected the Christian faith. I therefore, though I am no opposer, and wish to know the truth, cannot go with the crowd of men in sub-

mitting without a struggle my free mind to a faith of which I am not yet thoroughly convinced; I prefer to stand calmly for a while with this or that one who rises above the mass of men as a tower. I would rather err with Plato, than be right with those simple ones. Or, it may be, if he does not go so far as this, he thinks that if he could but shape Christianity according to his own conception of a true religion; if he could rationalize faith, and take out of it its mystical or mysterious element, and make it on a level with natural religion and with his own reason, he would have pleasure in calling Christ his Lord. The pastor might set forth the truth that no man is called to believe against his reason; but Christianity lays on every man the obligation to *search;* and to bring to this inquiry a humble and teachable spirit. Without entering here into the rational defence of Christianity, it may be seen at once that the attitude of a person, — such as has been described, — is one not yet prepared to enter the kingdom of God; for this making of *conditions*, as it were, with God, before coming to Christ, will not allow a man to be saved while the world stands. The instance also of one who supposes that his mental state is peculiar, and that he has peculiar difficulties, that there never was a case like his; this is another illustration of the same intellectual pride. But pride of any kind is opposed to faith; and when we see human wisdom joined to fallibility, human strength stumbling on the edge of imbecility, human morality slaying itself with its own vanity, and even human goodness overborne by native selfishness, why should there be pride in the sight of a perfect God? The true glory of our nature begins in the depths of a humbled spirit; in the death of the self, to find the true self, the higher life, in God.

We might also mention the *fear of man*, the fear of losing popularity, of losing one's social *status*, of being looked upon as bigoted, as a very common hinderance to young persons in the way of doing that act of faith toward an

unseen God, which has nothing brilliant in it, which appeals in no form or sense to the ambitious principle, or to selfish interest; and which, on the contrary, is a real humiliation of the outer man.

But we will dwell no longer upon these difficulties and delusions of the will and the imagination, which the truly *unwilling mind* creates for itself, because it must find something false to prop itself upon, when it refuses to rest upon the true. The words of Christ are explicit, "*Whosoever he be of you who forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*"

In regard, then, to the difficulties which beset the inquirer after eternal life, it may be seen that there is no obstacle which can really stand the test of truth in the way of the inquirers who approach the Redeemer by an act of faith; who bring to him their wants, confess to him their sins, consecrate to him their powers, and receive from him his word of peace and everlasting life. The pastor should then exhort to an *immediate coming* to Christ, — an immediate and entire surrender to his divine claims. Let him urge the inquirer to disregard unessentials, and to do the main thing. Union by faith with a personal Redeemer is the way of salvation. Press to an instant choice of Christ, to a casting of the soul upon him by faith. It is not thinking, or knowing, or reasoning, or feeling, or doing, but it is *believing* on Christ with the whole heart, that brings new life and salvation into the soul.

But let the pastor be aware of the truth, that there are *differences in the circumstances of conversion*, though none in the way of salvation. These differences spring from the character of the inquirer, and also from the freedom of the Spirit's action. The Spirit is not bound. All to whom Christ is made known, who are converted, must, indeed, have come to the Saviour; but, with one man the conversion may take the form of a solemn dedication of his whole being to Christ; with another man it may be an act of

simple obedience to the commandment of Christ, of doing his plain and reasonable duty; with another it may be the abandonment of a sinful propensity or affection; with another it may be a new interest felt in the words and truth of Christ, in the Scriptures, or in the preaching of the gospel, so that there is a clear vision of divine things, even as he who said, "*Whereas I was blind, now I see;*" and with another, still, it may be a sudden and uncontrollable emotion of joy, like a burst of sunlight, to have found at last the Redeemer of the soul.

Who can tell what will be the first holy act of a soul? Can we always know what direction the waters of a great river will take when they burst their icy fetters? They may move on evenly in the regular channel marked out for them, or they may deluge the banks, and plough for themselves a new channel. Yet there *is* a moment when the will yields itself to the higher claims of God, and does its first holy act; when its hesitancy and unbelief pass away, when it delights to do holily. Sometimes a step, almost literally a step, in the right direction, away from sin, and toward Christ, results in the salvation of the soul. A single act, perhaps a very small one, of the heart's true movement and disposition to come to Christ, is all that is needed.

The humblest prayer uttered in the depths of the heart, like the publican's, the secret tear of true submission and trust, the Lord will recognize and accept; and here is the pastor's great responsibility, to perceive the true marks of the beginnings of new-born faith, however faint; and not by coldness, or harshness, or inexcusable neglect, or cruel ignorance, "to break the bruised reed, or to quench the smoking flax." He who but desires to come to Christ is in the way to him. Let the feeblest desire be cherished. Bid the soul go on, and follow out this little thread of desire till it shall lead to the feet of Jesus! Beware of extinguishing the beginnings of repentance, by overlaying them with

requirements hard for the mature Christian to bear. If we do this, instead of being the ministers of Christ's new evangel of hope and love, we may be but as the old Hebrew priests and lawyers of the law of condemnation and death. We should ever remember that "a little faith saves."

In conversing with the inquirer, one should be exceedingly simple in language and thought. Do not be afraid of using the plainest and homeliest illustrations, even with the most intelligent people who are beginning to seek the way of life; for they are but infants in spiritual things. One should also be cheerful and hopeful. Even when most earnest and faithful, do not grow anxious and threatening; do not appear over-solicitous for the welfare of the inquirer, for God is more in earnest than the best man can be, that his erring child should be saved. Never leave the impression that God is not able and willing to save the soul; but, on the contrary, that he will surely save the soul, if it trusts in him.

And do not say too much. One should strive to say the *fit* word, rather than to heap up words; the right word is the great thing. Touch the real difficulty, and be satisfied to do that. Give the proper medicine for the disease. Do not suffer yourself to be led away from the subject you wish to talk upon into some general discussion; for the mind is skilful in evasions, as was said of one of old, who, when he "*saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart.*"

Do not suffer the awakened mind to rest for its hope in any outward means or object, in prayer, reading the Scriptures, attending religious meetings, the doing of any duty, or of any act, however good and charitable. Show him the true place and use of those things; but show him that eternal life is in God alone, in personal union with God and Christ. And in this light even faith does not save; but it is Christ, the divine object of faith, who, when he is truly found, gives to the soul its new life, by making it a partaker of his own.

Discrimination in the treatment of inquirers is required, and we should particularly study the exquisite adaptation of Christ's teachings, in his recorded dealings with the souls of those who were seeking the kingdom of God. Some persons are inclined to despondency, and need encouragement, while others are sanguine, and need an abating of their confidence.

The real disposition comes out strikingly in this moment when the soul is stripped of its disguises under the searching eye of God. Mild words are good for some, but severe, alarming, terror-striking words are better for others. Some inquirers who are wanting in self-reliance, are to be dissuaded from conversing with too many persons; and they should be led away from all human reliance, from reliance on the pastor himself, to God. Persons of an undecided temper in other things will show this in matters of religion.

Sometimes it is even necessary to urge such irresolute persons to make a solemn resolution, or covenant, with God, a dedication of themselves to God, in a set form of words. But this is a perilous step to take, for it is an outside pressure brought to bear upon the soul; and one should be careful not to suffer the mind of the inquirer to consider this resolution as being in itself an evidence of conversion. If, however, one makes the resolution from the heart, it is surely an evidence of true conversion.

Set before the inquirer the grand *attractions* of the gospel; tell him he is not called to give up the pleasures of the world and receive nothing in return, or to espouse a barren, unrewarding faith; but in Christ are peace, happiness, honor, power, riches, true manhood, perfection of character, unending love, and everlasting life. The gospel appeals to the noblest instincts and unlimited hopes of our nature. In it we realize our ideals. While we preach the cross, we should never forget the crown.

Prayer with the inquirer is sometimes good; and as it may be the first time that the stubborn knees have ever

bowed, the impenitent will may yield when the knees are bent. The confessions of inquiring and troubled spirits should be sacredly preserved; otherwise the pastoral relation would be, and would deserve to be, destroyed.

3. *The young convert.*

There is no sight more pathetic than a young Christian in the first glow of his new love, knowing little of what lies before him, and thinking perhaps that his salvation is gained and the work done. The pathetic part of it is, that he lives as yet in the ideal of Christianity, and when the actual comes, his strength may be found to be weakness. If any one, therefore, needs kindness, counsel, charity, patience, continual support and encouragement, it is he. He needs instruction, building up, in the things of the new life.

(1.) *Strive to lead the convert to a pure conviction of sin and a high standard of piety.* Let him lay the foundations deep. Conviction should not cease at conversion, but should rather increase in intensity as the mind draws nearer a pure God, and has a clearer insight of its own character; and while the mind is softened by these fires of conviction, it may be stamped with the highest, noblest type of Christian character. Let the pastor feel how critical is the moment with the new convert's soul, and let him strive, as far as in him lies, that the work may be thorough, that the perfect image of Christ may be set before the mind, as its everlasting pattern and hope. "*Abide in me, and I in you; as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me.*" The young convert should be told that he is called not so much to happiness as to holiness, and to real service; and that final salvation consists not in the feeble beginnings of goodness, but in the perfected life of God in the soul.

(2.) *Nourish the mind in divine truth and with the words of Christ.* This is the time to feed the mind upon the word, that it may grow thereby; for then it receives it gladly; it

finds its real nourishment and delight in divine truth. Then the soul should be indoctrinated in higher wisdom, and be founded upon a broad and intelligent faith.

Some system of regular instruction of those newly expressing a hope should be established, like the excellent Methodist class system. The special instruction of young converts is moulding the model before the clay is dry; and, as far as the pastor is concerned, the work should be faultless.

(3.) *Direct to an immediate entering upon the active service of the Master.* The young convert need not be urged at first to the taking up of great or disheartening works, but he should be guided into the path of true service in simple ways; to visit the poor, to aid by all practicable efforts some benevolent object, to instruct in the Sunday school, to pray for the spiritual welfare of his companions, and, in every unostentatious way, to strive for their good, and, above all, to be a good son, father, husband, citizen, man. Such things are better than to encourage the young convert to be conspicuous at first in public meetings, or to attempt publicly to instruct others. If he speaks at all, let it be briefly, and in the meetings of those who are young disciples like himself, and let him pray rather than speak. But he should prepare for a self-denying service of God and man. The age calls for a vigorous generation of workers, and for a religion that is full of the primitive spirit of a cheerful obedience of Christ in all good works. The young convert should be made to think that he can, with Christ's help, accomplish great things for God.

(4.) *Prepare the young convert as early as it is proper to make a public profession of his faith.* The tendency now is, perhaps, to too great haste in this; but this duty, while it should not be hurried, should not be delayed. There should be sufficient time, as in the case of the primitive "catechumens," for the true probation of young converts,

to see whether the good seed die not when exposed to the influences of the world.

But the trial need only be long enough for the satisfactory proof of the real implantation of a principle of new life in the heart; and anything like marked progress in the graces of the Christian life cannot be looked for.

(5.) *Do not neglect young converts.* This is a great sin of the churches; and for this reason as much as for any other, we believe that the churches languish. Young converts feel keenly the least neglect on the part of the church and the pastor. They still lean upon others. They are but infants of a day in the divine life. Their spiritual light is fitful and unsteady, and sometimes they are in total darkness. They require constant sympathy, guidance, teaching, encouragement, lest their light go out in darkness and gloom. It is well for the pastor to appoint meetings of prayer and conversation with the young converts, to organize them, as was suggested, into classes, if there be a number of them. In such private meetings they may be encouraged to speak more freely of themselves, and to pray together, and thus be gradually trained to take their place and do their part in the church. Church members should be taught to be interested personally in young converts, to welcome them warmly, to take them into their friendship, and instruct them in the way of life.

If God gives to a pastor converts to the truth he preaches, it is his duty to take care of them, and not to suffer them to wander back into the world. Young converts are a joyful but anxious gift to the pastor.

(6.) *Hold up the truth that the Christian life is a conflict.* Action and reaction are equal; and when the first emotions of love subside, temptations revive, and peace is gone; the tide of feeling recedes, and leaves the soul flat and spiritless. It is in trouble; it believes that its hope is taken away; but if the young convert is impressed with the

truth that he cannot be at once a perfect man; that he must not expect the great results of a Christian life at its entrance; that he cannot have the crown before he has borne the cross; that the Christian life, from beginning to end, is a constant struggle, a daily conflict with temptation and the powers of evil; then he is not easily discouraged and strangely disappointed at the returning strength of the sinful principle. Under such stern but pure counsel the soul of the young Christian cheerily rallies from defeat; its powers of manful resistance are called out; it finds itself and its Saviour. The idea of self-sacrifice, the willingness to lose life for Christ's sake, is the great and important lesson for the young Christian to learn. The strife against selfishness, which is sin, is the life-long conflict taken up by the young Christian, even as Luther translates (1 Tim. 1: 18), "That thou therein do a knightly work."

(7.) *Warn young converts as to their friendships, occupations, and daily walk and living.* Books of pith and thought, clearly defining religious principles, and full of the Christian life, are of special value at such a time. Religious biographies would be good, did they not most commonly have a florid and unnatural coloring; did they not present an impossible piety. The "Acts of the Apostles" presents a grand study for this dawning period of the spiritual life. It might be asked, Should one throw up his old worldly friendships when he becomes a new man in Christ Jesus? Not unless in some way that he cannot avoid he is drawn by them into temptation and wrong doing; but he should, on the contrary, use the power of affection which he holds over such minds for their spiritual good. He has become a Christian to bring others to Christ. A Christian should never be false to his friendships; his blood is not chilled; his love is not put out by his Christianity; but where he cannot draw up a soul to light, he cannot suffer himself to be dragged down by it to darkness.

(8.) *Exhort to the duty of prayer and constant depen-*

dence upon the Holy Spirit, — to live by faith and not by sight.

§ 47. *Pastoral Oversight of the Church.*

We come, lastly, to the peculiar province of the Christian pastor, and what should be to him a "labor of love," the care of the interests of the church itself, so dear to the heart of Christ, and which was planted by his sufferings and death.

This subject may be divided into three parts, *Church Membership*, *Christian Nurture*, and the *Church's Benevolent Activity*.

1. *Church membership.*

(1.) "The *church* is no other than the outward visible representation of the inward communion of believers with the Redeemer and with one another;"[1] and in this sense, wherever the church exists, it is *one* body, inspired by one spirit, however diverse its parts and members; but in the more limited sense, a church is a local society of believers, united for the true observance of all Christian duties and ordinances.

(2.) Such a Christian church, is organized to promote the spiritual welfare and growth of its own members, and to "*hold forth the word of life*" to other men. The *power* of such a church consists in the purity with which it holds the faith, and in the living influence which that faith exerts upon the heart and life of every member; for power is not promised to the church except in the name of Christ, or through those moral and spiritual forces that he has established, or that are in him; and thus the church's power is almost purely *spiritual;* it is not in its numbers, nor its wealth, nor its intelligence, nor even in its practical benevo-

[1] Neander's Planting and Training, B. I., c. i.

lence or activity, but, essentially, in its faith, its true life in God. This power is to be manifested, to be made efficient, through the *life* of its members, in the way of silent testimony to the truth, radiating constantly from an inner source; and also through their preaching of the truth by actual efforts to convert souls to Christ, to instruct the ignorant, to relieve the poor, to manifest the spirit of charity to all men, to destroy the works of the devil, to reform every moral abuse and wrong, and to give the gospel to all who have it not.

(3.) Such being the main idea of the church, who then are, or are fitted to become, its *true members?* We answer, those who have, and who give credible evidence that they have, a true faith in Christ. The church has a right, it is true, to satisfy itself in regard to the faith and character of the candidate for admission; but no Christian church has the right to exclude a true believer; and a pastor should have a thorough understanding with his church, that there should be nothing in the creed, or the articles of the church, which bars its entrance to a genuine believer in Christ. Faith in Christ credibly attested, is the only true Congregational and scriptural ground of admission to the Christian church. God, by his apostles, did not require so much of those who were baptized out of heathenism, as he did of the Jewish converts, or as he does of Christians now; and thus there may be degrees of faith among those received into the church, as there are degrees of age, education, capacity, opportunity; in which cases the pastor is virtually called upon to decide. He would not require of a child what he would of a man; and even among the adult he would not ask of an ignorant person, that clearness of view in matters of faith, which would be naturally sought for in one who has had every intellectual and moral advantage. He must not hold the door close or open. He must not raise the standard of admission unreasonably high, but make it a true standard for the particular case, leaning, in his imperfect human

judgment, to the side of charity and hope. "The terms of communion should run parallel with the terms of salvation." The church is a school for heaven, and those who come into it are not those who are perfect, or who approximate to perfection, but those who need, and feel they need, training in knowledge and piety, and who are still sinful, ignorant, weak.

(4.) As to the *duties* of church members, while these might be formally stated, such as growth in knowledge, and holiness, prayerfulness, attention to all church ordinances and obligations, mutual care and friendship, just and benevolent living; yet so far as the *pastor's* influence upon the duties and life of church members is concerned, we would sum it up in the production of a true character, *a new spirit of life*. It is the enstamping of a new and higher spirit upon a people. It is a ministry not so much of outward things as of the spirit, the heart, the character; which writes its lasting lines in the most enduring qualities and affections of the nature. To write this epistle more and more deeply in the hearts of his people, and not only his own imperfect love and character, but the abiding love of God, and the perfect character of Christ, this is the great work of the pastor. He is to strive, in the spirit of his Lord, and by his help, to present every one of his flock "*holy and unblamable and unreprovable*," in the sight of God; and that pastorate cannot truly be called a successful one, which does not thus write itself in the hearts of those who wait upon it, bringing unto them the living spirit of Christ.

Here is the test of a pastorate, and happy are the pastors who can abide this test! Can all that are called successful abide this test? A true pastorate may not indeed have been granted the success of adding large numbers to the visible church; it may not have witnessed any remarkable growth in intelligence, influence, or outward prosperity; but on the hearts of the people a genuine work must have been wrought, the infusion of a new spirit, making them true,

upright, pure, self-denying, humble, happy, loving, good. How impressive is that passage from the Second of Corinthians! "And (if some among you deny my sufficiency) who then is sufficient for these things? For I seek no profit (like most) by setting the word of God to sale, but I speak from a single heart, from the command of God, as in God's presence, and in fellowship with Christ. Will you say that I am again beginning to commend myself? Or think you that I need letters of commendation (like some other man) either to you or from you? Nay, ye are yourselves my letter of commendation, a letter written in my heart, known and read of all men; a letter coming manifestly from Christ, and committed to my charge; written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not upon tables of stone, but upon the fleshly tables of the heart."[1] It is noticeable that the apostle changes somewhat the construction here; first it is the people written upon his own heart, and then it seems to be they who are the persons written upon, — a letter from Christ written upon their hearts by the Holy Spirit. At all events, it is a *spiritual* writing, a writing upon the heart, "*not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God.*" And these are the characters that are written, "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;*" and these are the fair credentials of a Christian pastorate, which cannot be mistaken nor gainsaid. We look, therefore, for a true pastoral work, in the production, by the grace of God, of this new character, comprehended in the New Testament term "*charity*," that "*charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned*," which the apostle Paul, in the first Epistle to Timothy, says is the end of all teaching. This divine "*charity*," or "love," is the vital principle in which all Christian virtues grow, the principle which is "*the bond of perfectness.*" It is not so much an act as

[1] Conybeare and Howson's translation.

a state of the soul, embracing all its acts, faculties, and being, and bringing a soul and a church to share in the spirit of God and of Christ, for "*he that loveth is born of God*," — "*that they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.*"

After thus setting forth this general and comprehensive result of a true pastoral care and oversight of the church, it seems hardly necessary to enter into further and more minute particulars. All things indeed should be done that are needed to bring about that grand consummation, to evolve that *new character*, built upon the sound and divine principles of Christ's life, and inspired by his spirit, — that heavenly citizenship, where all are "*kings and priests unto God.*"

(5.) In the very difficult matter of the church's moral oversight and *discipline*, in which the pastor, by his position, is constituted a leader, he is called upon to exercise the greatest wisdom and charity. He should always strenuously insist upon the thorough doing, in spirit and letter, of Christ's own rule in Matt. 18 : 15–18. The true subjects of church discipline are those, and only those, who are guilty of such offences as seriously affect their moral and Christian character, and clearly unfit them for church membership. The *object* of church discipline is, first of all, to reform and save the offender, and, secondly, to purify and save the church ; therefore discipline should always be conducted in a spirit of Christian love, and with a merciful intent.

As to the *method* of church discipline. Offences for which discipline should be administered are of two kinds, private and public.

Private offences are those committed against private individuals. The offended person in such cases should proceed strictly according to the rule given in Matthew. He should first go alone to the offender, open the case to him in a Christian spirit, and do all he can to bring about restitution

and repentance, instead of making the offence public. This is owed to the offender himself as a professing brother Christian. If this course has not been previously taken in a *bonâ fide* manner, the church may refuse, except under peculiar circumstances, to entertain the complaint. If Christian satisfaction cannot be obtained, the complainant may take with him two or three other judicious brethren to aid in reclaiming the erring brother. If these efforts are unavailing, a regular complaint is laid before the church, generally in writing, presenting a candid history of the case.

Public offences are gross, open, deliberate violations of morality, constituting public scandal. In these cases, private means to reclaim the offender, may, perhaps in some instances be dispensed with, or are impracticable; yet it is always better to follow the Saviour's rule, because the nature and end of church discipline are reformative. When explicit evidence is obtained, the church should at length proceed to take formal notice of the offence. A committee of the pastor and others should then be appointed to converse with, and, if possible, reclaim the offender. If all these efforts at reformation are totally unavailing, after thoroughly sifting the case in an impartial manner, the offender having ample time, means, and opportunity afforded him for explanation and defence, the church is compelled, (1.) to issue an admonition, (2.) to suspend communion (these two, in fact, are really the same[1]), (3.) the means already mentioned being in vain, to excommunicate the offender. Excommunication is a formal exclusion from the communion and privileges of the church; it puts a person in the position of one who is out of the recognized fellowship of the church. Congregational Christians believe that excommunication should take place only for great sins, "clearly proved, a previous process had, and the case determined by the whole church. Haste is the bane of church rule."[2]

[1] Dr. Bacon. [2] Cong. Dict.

John Robinson said, "Excommunication should be wholly *spiritual*, a merely rejecting the scandalous from the communion of the church, in the holy sacraments, and those other spiritual privileges which are peculiar to the faithful." The excommunicated person should be treated with kindness, should have the gospel preached to him, and he may be restored to church fellowship on his repentance and restitution, giving the church satisfactory proof of his reformation.

The *quasi* mode of excommunication now in vogue, called "withdrawing fellowship," is a milder method, not yet clearly established in congregational usage, but nevertheless advocated and practised by many of our best churches. It is the quiet dropping or separating from the church of those members who, though guilty of no gross sin, or essential error, yet do not walk regularly as good members. Minor irregularities, such as continued and persistent disregard of church relations, long neglect to remove church connections to churches in those places where the persons in question have removed; habitual absence from public worship and the communion table; the giving up of a distinctive Christian hope and returning to an avowedly worldly life, — are held to be sufficient reasons for leaving out such useless members from the church membership. We, nevertheless, are of the opinion that the prime fault is often with the church itself; that if Christians would but exercise kindly Christian fellowship, and do their duty faithfully and fraternally with one another, and especially with the erring, heeding the apostolic injunction, "*brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted;*" — "*bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;*" if this were more generally done, matters would rarely come to the pass of the excision of a member.

Vinet remarks (and in this he echoes the commonest fact of human nature) that "the remonstrances or reproofs which

are a part of pastoral discipline are much more easily dispensed to the poor and the weak than the rich and great." But this preparatory and milder moral discipline of a church in the way of private admonition and reproof, is chiefly in the pastor's hands, and should be done promptly and wisely; and he should endeavor, by striving personally for the reformation of the offender, to prevent things from coming before the church for public trial and adjudication. Meddling men, who have more zeal than tact or charity, should be steadily repressed in their endeavors to kindle every little spark of error and misconduct into a flame, that may involve the whole church in deadly controversy.

But the effect of the total neglect of church discipline would be the inevitable corruption of the church, as in the ancient church of Corinth; it would end in weakness and spiritual decline, and often in open and unchecked immorality.

(6.) In regard to the pastor's own *official* relations to the church, an old writer says they are "to feed the sheep; guide and keep them; draw them to him; discern their diseases; cure them by appropriate medicine; give warning; watch over and defend the flock." In the matter of discipline, of which we have just spoken, in the words of an ancient Congregational rule, "he is to lead and go before the church."[1] The pastor is the appointed overseer of the church in all its affairs, whether temporal or spiritual; he is the moderator of the church's meetings, the executive agent of its will, the leader in its worship, the dispenser of its ordinances and sacraments, and its guide in all religious duties.

As to the pastor's strictly official *authority*, of which we have before spoken, all the actual power, according to the Congregational idea, lies in the church itself, or with the united brethren of the church; the pastor, however, is the

[1] Cambridge Platform.

chief instrument or agent of executing and carrying out the church's authority. He is the church's executive officer. Nevertheless he is a minister, not a monarch. His voice may have a greater power than that of another member, but his vote and his ecclesiastical action has not a whit more. In a business meeting, he may, as the church's pastor, give advice, if he thinks proper; for he is the divinely appointed counsellor and guide of a church, and has therefore a certain power of administration, which is necessary, reasonable, and scriptural.

2. *Christian nurture.*

(1.) The church has a profound responsibility in regard to its children, and no truth is more familiar than that the hope of the church is in its children and youth. That church has prescience and true love, that never for a moment loses sight of the children born in its borders, and above all, of the children of believers. It is the duty of the church to see that these children are trained up "*in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" They are to be regarded as those already pledged to Christ, and who, through the faithfulness of believing parents, and of the church, will themselves become true disciples. Those children should grow up as naturally into the church and into the kingdom of heaven, as tenderly cared-for plants in a garden. This faith is rooted in nature, Scripture, and grace. But even little children have need of regeneration, and may be the true subjects of regeneration, or we limit the power of the renewing Spirit. The child is to be treated as if he had a soul to save, and is not to be left to grow up in sin until he is sinful enough to need salvation; he is to be brought into communion with the spiritual influences of Christ's kingdom; he is to be nourished in Christ's household; he is to be put into the very arms of Jesus, who said, "*Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.*" A study of the true force of that remarkable

expression *μαθητεύσατε* (Matt. 28 : 19) will greatly enlarge our hope and zeal as pastors; for the pastor, above all, should not neglect these young "disciples," who are the seed of the future church, and of his own particular church. The primitive church had certainly a more magnanimous and Christ-like view of its relations to little children and to households, than we at this day are accustomed to hold.

Of course Christian *parents* are the divinely appointed agents of the church, to teach their children the things of God, and to rear them for Christ and his service; they are to impart to their children Christian instruction, "which is of the Lord, deriving a quality and power from him, and communicating the same. Being instituted by him, it will of necessity have a method and a character peculiar to itself, or rather to him. It will be the Lord's way of education, having aims appropriate to him, and if realized in its full extent, terminating in results impossible to be reached by any merely human method."[1]

Parents are, in some sense, the parents of their children's souls. There is a connection of moral character, which produces results beautiful or terrible. What an argument has the pastor to urge parents to lead a godly life, and to cultivate family piety, whereby the house becomes "the church of childhood, the table and hearth a holy rite, and life an element of saving power." We speak here with earnestness, as of a matter of vital moment, that our impression is, that (with marked exceptions) there is a profound want on the part of believing parents in our Congregational churches (and perhaps this is not peculiar to our own communion) in instructing their children in Christian truth and piety, leading them by the hand to Christ, teaching them with the purpose, clearness, care, and heart they teach in matters pertaining to this world. Children are neglected religiously. This ought not so to be. It shows a deplor-

[1] Dr. Bushnell.

able want of faith. It must act disastrously on the interests of the church of Christ.

But the church itself, and the pastor as its chief agent, have also their duty to perform toward the children. This duty of the church in the training of its children and youth is commonly treated under the head of catechetics.

(2.) *Catechetics* (from κατηχέω, to sound; to utter sound; to teach by the voice; oral instruction) is the familiar teaching of the fundamental principles of divine truth drawn from the word of God. "Religious instruction renews continually the foundation of the church, and is the most real part of that tradition by which Christianity, not only as a doctrine, but also as a life, perpetuates itself from age to age. Catechizing is useful to those who are its immediate objects; it is useful to the parish; it is useful to the pastor himself, who by the duty of adapting religion to the apprehension of children, is unconsciously carried back to simplicity and the true names of things. On all these accounts it deserves earnest attention, which it also demands by its difficulty, not the same for all pastors, but always great."[1] Vinet gives also his opinion in favor of direct instruction *from the Bible*, without catechism or manual. He says, "Where ought a child to find his religion? All that he can find himself he must find, but that is little; all the rest is in the Bible. It is the Bible that must teach him. Catechizing presupposes the Bible, which it does but digest and systematize. It is by their mutually interlacing one another that the ideas of the Bible live, as do the fibres of a living body; to separate them is to destroy life."[2]

The modern system of *Sunday schools*, and their relations to the church, is one of exceeding interest to the pastor, who should firmly hold the theory that the Sunday school belongs to the essential organization and working system of the church; that it should not maintain an inde-

[1] Vinet, Pastoral Theology, p. 229. [2] Ibid., p. 229.

pendent existence; that it should be established or adopted by the church as its own instrumentality; that it should be ordered, regulated, and maintained by the church through its pastor. "It is part of his ministry."[1]

3. *The church's benevolent activity.*

The *ideal* of a Christian church is one where the working capacity of every member, the peculiar talent of every member, is developed from a living principle of faith, in unity with the general plan of God in the establishment of the church, or the common work which the church has to do.

That idea may be carried out by a concert of action, and a carefully organized plan of action, in order to enable every member to use his peculiar gift, whatever it may be, for the service of the whole; so that there may be occupation for the capacity of every one for good, in some more general system of operations. "All working, and always working," was Wesley's motto. Not the most ignorant, obscure, or weak, should be permitted to remain altogether unemployed; and evidently the tendency of the Christian spirit of the age is, and will be more and more in the future, to make every nominal member of the church a living, preaching, working, real member. He is the best pastor who organizes and draws out the greatest working capacity of his church in harmonious action; while at the same time he guards against an unwise and useless waste of energy, economizes power, prevents profitless repetition of labor, and guides effort in the best channels. He is called upon to impel and regulate the benevolent activity of his church, especially in three directions, *almsgiving*, *home evangelization*, *and missionary enterprise.*

(1.) *Almsgiving*, or the giving of money for purely charitable purposes. The pastor has a great work to do to raise the benevolent spirit of the church to something

[1] Dr. Tyng.

like the New Testament standard. It is now, notwithstanding the greatly increased benevolence of the church, almost infinitely below the standard and spirit of the gospel. The pastor should earnestly preach the truth that "*Christ is all, and in all;*" that all one has, as well as all one is, is Christ's; not a tenth of one's property, which was the old Hebrew rule, but the whole of it, which is the Christian rule. In other words, no one has an exclusive property right in anything that he possesses; it is but a relative possession; the claims of God and of one's fellowmen are always to be considered in relation to his rights of ownership. If God, indeed, should clearly call for all that a man has, he should be ready to surrender it. He may not be called upon to give more than a tenth part of his income for strictly charitable purposes, nor even that, under some circumstances; but he should ever gladly act upon the New Testament principle, to give "*as God hath prospered him.*" There should be the spirit of self-sacrifice in this, as in all things that pertain to the Christian life. This is a great and vital subject, deeply affecting the interests of humanity, and of the church; and the pastor should so preach, and as far as he can, practise, upon the Christian law of giving, that his people shall be brought to approximate to the true standard. This will be for their own highest good and happiness. He is also to encourage good men to gain money with a positive Christian aim, in order to do good, to furnish the means of carrying on Christian works of greater than ordinary dimensions, requiring greater resources. He is to systematize the church's benevolence, to regulate the whole matter upon some comprehensive working plan in which room is still left for spontaneous charity, so that giving shall be made a part of religion, of praise. Each church should have its own system of missions, mission schools, houses for the poor, for the aged, for the infirm, as well as its system of aiding more general objects; for there is more real enthusiasm in what is our own than

in what is of general interest, even if genuinely Christian. We shall do well to copy the sagacity of our Episcopalian brethren in this respect, who have rightly divined one source of power and benevolent energy to lie in the concentration of interest upon definite objects, those that are well recognized as denoting the vineyard which is to be faithfully cultivated by a particular church.

There has been, doubtless, in the past, with much that is genuine and liberal, something of unreasoning and unintelligent benevolence in our churches, a kind of superstitious giving without the giving of the man himself with it; as if mere giving in itself benefited the soul; so that Edward Irving truly said that "money is the universal corruption, when we use it for discharging obligations contracted by spiritual or moral services."

(2.) *Home evangelization.* It is a difficult yet great achievement, to induce church members to enter upon personal work for the cause of religion and humanity, to labor to elevate the condition even of those lying at their door, of the destitute, ignorant, unevangelized classes in our own towns and cities. The consecration needed for this work is to be set forth; and the actual wants of the neighborhood in which a church is placed, are to be exhibited with truth and vivid particularity. These claims of the poor should be laid on the conscience of church members, and the law of love to our neighbor should be pressed home. "*Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*" The responsibility should be rolled upon Christians. The great encouragements of such a work, the motives prudential and religious, motives as palpable as those for draining a poisonous marsh and turning it into good farming soil, — should be presented; but, above all, the pastor himself, with such devoted church members as he can influence to join him, should enter courageously into this work, as Dr. Chalmers did, with his few helpers, when

he undertook the care, temporal and spiritual, of ten thousand poor of the city of Glasgow. The main principle of Dr. Chalmers was, that a Christian church is responsible for the physical, social, and moral, as well as spiritual condition, of all who are within its parish limits not otherwise cared for. It should provide for the temporal necessities of its poor, not leaving them to the cold charities of the civil authority, and should see that they are properly fed, clothed, and educated. He thought that the debased condition of the poor of large Christian cities was mainly owing to the apathy and unfaithfulness of the churches in doing their duty to the people and communities among whom they were placed.[1]

(3.) *Missionary enterprise.* It is the work of the church to give the gospel, of which it is put in charge, to men, to convert and Christianize the world. Its duty to do this is seen chiefly from three reasons: (1.) The universality of the gospel, which fits it to meet the religious wants of all men and the world, — its adaptation to become a universal religion; (2.) The fact that the gospel contains the vital principle of spiritual restoration, in fact, of religion, or rebinding to God, — which art, commerce, education, letters, philosophy, do not contain; (3.) The direct command of Christ to his disciples (Mark 16 : 15; Matt. 28 : 19).

"The spirit of missions is the divine energy of the gospel." In one sense, missions are the offspring of the church, and in another sense, they are the church itself in action, moving to take possession of the world. The Christian church, in its inception and history, is a missionary body for the world's conversion; and it cannot cease to promote missions while any part of the world remains without the true knowledge of God.

The theory of Christian missions cannot be discussed in so short a space; but it may be remarked that the primitive

[1] Hanna's Life of Chalmers, vol. ii. chapters vi., x., xi.

method of missionary operations is contained in Acts 5 : 42; to "teach and preach Jesus" with fervor and faith, as did the apostles, the first missionaries, has been the central agency in the missionary work of all times and countries. Here is the main reliance; here is contained the seed of future piety, faith, industry, freedom, progress, heaven. Christ said, "*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.*" The great-hearted John Evangelist Gossner wrote to his missionary teachers among the mountainous districts of India, "Believe, hope, love! The Lord is coming, and to every one he will say, Where hast thou left the souls of those heathen? Swiftly seek these souls, and enter not without them into the presence of the Lord."

Every agency which is allied with, and aids, the preaching of Christ, and confirms, conserves, and hands down to the coming generations the results of missionary labors, such as schools, books, and translations in native tongues, and all the inventions and appliances of a Christian civilization, all that helps to elevate the outward material condition of heathen nations, all that goes to build up a permanent and organized Christian society, — is really included in the idea and practical operation of Christian missions. Christ may be preached in the religious instruction given in mission schools; but the old order should not be essentially reversed; Christianity carries in its ample bosom the arts of life, but the arts of life do not carry Christianity with them, nor do they bring men to God. To raise the tone of public life and society in heathendom is one of the immediate fruits of missions, and we may say that the production of a Christian civilization is the best proof of the success of Christian missions; but that is not the direct aim of Christian missions, which is a *spiritual* work for the con-

version of the heathen to Christ. Of course the churches at home must do this work, must furnish means and men, prayer and faith.

The first enthusiasm of missions has passed away. The work is one of vast magnitude. Much more has been accomplished than appears, but the fruits seem small. Greater energy, wisdom, thought, combined effort, inspiration, above all, *faith*, must be put into the work; for, to penetrate the stony surface of ancient false religions which are centuries older than historical Christianity, and to sow the seed of divine truth so that it shall spring up and cover these vast moral wastes with new verdure and life, requires an apostolic trust in the living forces of the gospel. The churches have not yet shown this primitive faith.

The condition of the heathen world is a subject which has oppressed the best and most hopeful minds. John Foster's faith and imagination were not of a hopeful character, but he was a true Christian; and while he thought that the problem of moral evil, as presented in the stupendous form of heathenism, could not be solved by reason, but must be left unsolved in simple faith, yet he believed that Christians, and the Christian church, should strive to draw from it all possible lessons of discipline, self-denial, patience, love, and heroic faith; and, in the midst of his painful mental darkness on the subject, he strenuously advocated the cause of Christian missions, and thought that our age of the church was the one destined to open the way, to begin in earnest the work, which future times might more rapidly complete.

The New Testament looks forward, not only to the perfect freedom of the single soul, but of the race, from the power of sin and evil; and there is not only this great hope of the emancipation of humanity to animate us, but also a stimulating fear to impel us, in regard to the actual state of the heathen world as it is represented to us in the Scriptures, in the facts of history, and of nature; as Foster says,

"Christians should be kept in an habitual and alarming sense of the fact" of the terribly sunken spiritual condition of a large portion of the world.

God has given grounds of hope to encourage us to labor for the heathen, inasmuch as his living Spirit is present in the hearts of all his creatures; and in the fact that the gospel has power to reach that religious capacity, that sense of God, which, however deadened and obscured, still slumbers in every human soul, and which, even in the heathen mind, struggles tortuously to reach the source whence it came. There is something of perverted common truth, of the blind working of the religious principle, in many of the heathen religions themselves, to which the gospel can, at some time, we believe, strongly and successfully appeal. In the deep-rooted Confucian idea of the paternal relation and government, interwoven in all the life, worship, and civilization of China, the Christian belief in a heavenly Father finds a faint affinity and preparation; in the Indian conception of absorption into Buddha, the profound truth of man's being made a partaker of the divine nature through the incarnation and sufferings of Jesus Christ, is shadowed forth; in the Islamic faith in one God who is a Spirit, the Christian truth of the unity and spirituality of the divine nature awakens a certain response. Even the ante-Christian pantheism of the older pagan religions, which still lingers in them, is different from that, and has more sincerity in it, and more of the memory of a lost monotheism, than the deliberate anti-Christian pantheism of the modern naturalistic philosophy.

We are disposed to find encouragement in this, as affording some little ground for the gospel to stand upon in those unchristianized lands, and as proving that God does not leave himself without a witness among any people. And we see, too, that where the gospel goes, it has fresh power, and produces fruits of wondrous beauty. But those who have the gospel must still, as of old, send it to those

who have it not. It depends greatly upon the *pastors*, if they themselves have the evangelic spirit, whether the churches are aroused to zeal, and are filled with activity in this work, which looks beyond the horizon of the present, which is entirely unselfish in its spirit, and whose principle of success is wrapped up in the pregnant words, "*According to your faith be it unto you!*"

Never was it so true as now that "*the field is the world.*" Never was the whole world so hopefully open to a true and catholic gospel. Never have old errors and false religions that have bound this groaning and travailing earth, shown such evident signs of weakness and readiness to vanish away. Never was it so great a sin of unbelief for the church and disciples of Christ, to be insensible to the debt of love they owe their fellow-men. The unity of God involves the unity of the human race. The divine law of love to our neighbor has taken on world-wide proportions, that cannot be met by the best efforts of human philanthropy, or philosophy, however noble; for it seeks to free, and to transform with a divine life, that which is immortal in humanity; it rises above every distinction of name and nation, and aims at bringing all men whom Christ loved, into one true brotherhood of man, and under one blessed fatherhood of God.

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